# *The* TRILLIUM

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*The Newsletter of the Piedmont Chapter*
*of the North American Rock Garden Society*
*Raleigh, Durham, and Chapel Hill, North Carolina*

**January-February, 1996**


Sometimes the end of a year brings a letdown because the excitement created by the holidays suddenly dispels, and one is left to face some grey days. But hellebores begin to bloom just after Christmas, and the tips of galanthus and crocus start to show, along with those of the early daffodils.

Nancy Goodwin will talk about the little bulbs at our January meeting, and we have the February lecture to anticipate as well. George Pyne will discuss native orchids and smaller wildflowers of North Carolina.

The foliage of *Arum italicum* and the cyclamens remind us that winter has its beauties; this issue of *The Trillium* includes articles on "Growing Aroids" and "Cyclamen Serendipity." Sandra and Ray Ladendorf's letter arrived just as our last issue was being printed, and it is included herein. "An English Garden Writing Addiction" provides a foretaste of a lecture that chapter member Roy Dicks will present at N. C. State University on January 17. Details are on page 10.

*Barbara Scott, Interim editor*

**In this issue**



## From the chair

The second of the China series of programs was as exotic as expected! Whoever finds a source of the variegated stem bamboo, please let the rest of us know. I'm planning to use large plastic barrels with the bottoms cut out for containing the bamboo. Concrete pipe in four-foot lengths has worked well for me in a previous garden, but it is heavy to manipulate. The top edge of any container used should project 3 to 4 inches above ground so you can see and remove runners before they take root. (Contact me if you are interested in finding a source for barrels.)

The October auction netted over $500; November's added a bit over $100 more, so these painless fund-raisers continue to fund good programs.

Our sincere thanks to the staff of the Totten Center and, in particular, to our contact person, Rob Gardner, for opening up and preparing our meeting place during the winter months when the Center customarily isn't open. See you on January 20.

*Norman Beal, Chair*

## Growing aroids: More than just a passing phase *by Alan Galloway*

Many plant lovers have a number of aroids in their own homes and may not even know it. For example, do you have a *Dieffenbachia* in the kitchen, a peace lily (*Spathiphyllum*) in the living room, or maybe an *Anthurium* in the sun room? Most people know aroids, but very few people recognize them. Perhaps it is because of the lack of general literature on this plant family. I recall that, some years ago, I was one of several invited guests at an annual get-together. During dinner conversation, I pointed to a hanging basket over the aquarium and asked the host how long she had been growing aroids. She happily replied, "I've only had those adorable little sea-monkeys for a couple of weeks". In the most tactful way possible, I told her that I was referring to the Philodendron plant (a very common aroid) above the little sea-monsters' home.

It goes without saying that the word aroid (the more common term for the the plant family Araceae) summons all kinds of images to the mind. Also, given some of the common names of certain aroids—devil's tongue, dead horse arum, green dragon, and voodoo lily, it is no wonder that people have monstrous images about this monocot plant family. The family consists of some 110 genera and about 2,500 species. Whereas most are tropical and subtropical, several, such as Jack-in-the-pulpit and skunk cabbage, are well known in temperate areas.

Even though aroids are noted for their beautiful, often striking foliage, some species are especially noteworthy because of their flowers. Technically, what we view as the flower of an aroid is not the actual flower, but an inflorescence. This inflorescence consists of a petal, called a spathe, that semi-surrounds a protuberance, called a spadix. The actual flowers are located on this protuberance. Aroid inflorescences range in size from less than an inch in the water lettuce (*Pistia*) to the world's largest, *Amorphophallus titanum*, which often exceeds the height of a man. Now this plant could prove challenging to aesthetically work into the rock garden! Several aroids are quite well-known, not only for their strange-looking blooms, but for the scent they emit to attract pollinators such as carrion beetles and blowflies. Do I really need to explain any further how these blooms smell?

Personally, I do not consider aroids to be good candidates for the rock garden, if one follows the strict definition of a rock garden. But my experience in visiting gardens of NARGS members has been that these gardeners have several themes within their whole garden. I believe it is in these complementary garden themes that aroids are most suited for displaying their unique qualities.

***When it comes to aroids for the woodland garden, one has plenty of selections from which to choose.***

I have grown several aroids in my garden in Raleigh that I have found to be hardy in our Zone 7 area; I like to group them as follows: aroids for the water and bog garden, aroids for the woodland garden, and aroids for the "tropical-appearing" garden.

**Water and bog aroids.** Because I have not yet developed a water and bog garden, I have had success in growing some aquatic aroids in temporary plastic tubs for the last two years. One of the unique aroids quite suitable for the bog garden is the skunk cabbage (*Symplocarpus foetidus*). It flowers in winter and produces its inflorescence at ground-level. It has the ability to raise the temperature of its spadix by 60 degrees above the surrounding atmosphere. This allows the plant to protect the spathe from freezing, and the rise in temperature also helps to attract pollinators. Another recommended candidate for the bog garden is sweet flag (*Acorus calamus*). Even though it is probably the most non-aroid in appearance, it has the widest distribution of any aroid, ranging from Scandinavia to the equator. It is iris-like in appearance and spreads itself in the bog garden by creeping rhizomes. The evergreen foliage can be either solid green or have shades of cream, gold, or white variegation.

Two aroids that actually prefer to be submerged in water are the golden club (*Orontium aquaticum*) and the arrowhead plant (*Peltandra virginica*). Both are natives of North America. At a quick glance, the golden club appears to have no spathe at all, but a closer look reveals one well below the spadix. The spadix is bright yellow above a white band and hence is the source of the common name, "golden club." The arrowhead plant is primarily known for its sagittate or hastate leaves; its flowers are rather insignificant. Another possibility for the water and bog garden is *Lysichiton*, the western counterpart of *Symplocarpus*. In its native habitat from California to Alaska, it puts forth giant flowers much like those of calla lilies.

**Woodland garden aroids.** Hopefully, I will never be asked what type of garden theme is my favorite; but, if I were asked, I would say that a woodland garden would definitely rank up there at the top. When it comes to aroids for the woodland garden, one has plenty of selections from which to choose. A favorite genus of mine is *Arisaema,* which has some 150 species ranging from Mexico through eastern North America, eastern Asia, and eastern and

cental Africa. North Carolina is the native habitat of two species of Arisaema, the Jack-in-the-pulpit, *A. triphyllum*, and the green dragon, *A. dracontium*. Arisaemas are tuberous and go through an annual dormancy. Most species have only one leaf per tuber, but some have two. The leaves are nearly always compound with two to more than 20 leaflets. The stalks of some species have well-defined sheaths that overlap to form a pseudostem that can get quite tall, as in that of *A. tortuosum,* which reaches 6 feet. Most Arisaemas have very attractive foliage in varying shades of green. A few species such as *A. sikokianum* have beautiful silver variegation. I have mine planted among native ferns for a contrasting texture. *Arisaema speciosum* is quite stunning with each leaflet edged in red. And no one can forget the first sighting of *A. ringens* with its large glossy green leaves.

In my garden this past spring, my *Arisaema griffithii* bloomed, and it probably has one of the strangest flowers of its genus. It is blackish-purple, covered with a netting of green veins and has an expanded hood. Should you walk up on this creature in the garden, you would be convinced that you had come upon a cobra ready to strike. Although *A. triphyllum* is the most common species available, it has a large variation in its flowers. It can be solid green, solid maroon, striped white, or any combination of these.

An east Asian cousin to Arisaema is *Pinellia*, with six or seven species. Two of the better known species are *P. tripartita* with three-part leaves and *P. pedatisecta*, which resembles a dwarf version of *Arisaema dracontium*. Both species range in height from 12 to 24 inches. From China there is *P. cordata*, with silvery white veins on each leaf. Although *P. cordata* is a small plant, only reaching six or seven inches tall, it has the unique trait of propagating by making small bulblets at the junction of the leaf blade and the stalk. I have successfully grown these in the garden for three years.

Suitable for a sunny spot in the back of the garden is the dragon arum, *Dracunculus vulgaris*. It reaches some three to four feet with pedate leaves and produces a large deep maroon flower that smells of rotting flesh. Although the scent of this flower does not qualify it for the vase in the foyer, it is quite magnificent to see, even if you have to hold your nose at 50 paces! The original tuber I planted three years ago has multiplied into a clump now two feet wide.

A number of woodland aroids suitable for our Piedmont gardens are winter growers. *Arisarum proboscideum*, commonly known as the mouse plant, starts leaf growth in December and flowers in early spring so that it is pollinated by gnats. Italian arum (*Arum italicum)* and many other arum species begin leaf growth in October and November. One of the best plant combinations that I have seen is the flowers and leaves of cyclamen intermixed with *Arum italicum*. Many arums begin to flower only after they have fully leafed out, unlike the arisaemas.

**Hardy aroids that give a tropical appearance.** Probably one of the most well-known aroids used for its foliage of various colors in the home or the garden in North Carolina is the caladium, even though we must treat this as an annual or lift the tubers for winter storage. But seriously, how many gardeners do you know that diligently dig up plants every autumn because they are not hardy? Fret not, for there are quite a few aroids hardy in our area that give a tropical look and do not require any exceptional care in the winter months other than a nice layer of mulch.

Every gardener is probably familiar with the common elephant ear (*Colocasia esculenta*). This giant-leafed aroid has several closely related genera that, when planted together in the garden, will make you feel as if you are in Tahiti. Several species of *Alocasia* and *Xanthosoma* do very well here in North Carolina. These genera tend to get even larger than the common elephant ear. The leaves of *Alocasia macrorrhiza* tend to point upward, which gives this aroid the appearance of being quite tall. *Alocasia californicum* does not get as tall, but its heart-shaped leaves still tend to point upward. *Xanthosoma sagittifolium* probably is the one aroid that can produce the largest leaf in our growing season. Its leaves are pointed on the corners and tend to point downward.

These giant aroids have more to offer than just impressive leaf sizes; they also have majestic colors. A new cultivar of *Colocasia* just becoming available—'Jet Black Wonder'—has huge leaves of almost solid black. When planted beside the yellow-leafed *Xanthosoma maffafa*, it yields a striking color combination. If variegated leaves happen to be one of your favorites, then you will be impressed with the variegated form of *Alocasia macrorrhiza* with its white and green patterns. Several cultivars of *Colocasia* have varying shades of purple and red on the leaves and the leaf stalks. All of these varieties of elephant ears have proven reliably hardy in my garden, although they are somewhat late in emerging after winter, sometimes even waiting till early June. But once above ground, they seem to grow several inches per day.

My favorite plant genus, and one which is suitable for the "tropical-appearing" garden, is *Amorphophallus*. To date, I have found at least three species that are cold hardy in our region. At first, you may not only ask how to pronounce this genus's name, but also what is it? If you can imagine an *Arisaema* on steroids, then you

have a reasonable picture of what an *Amorphophallus* looks like. Considered a tuberous herb in its native habitats, it usually sends up a single leaf stalk from two to seven feet tall topped off with an equally wide spread of leaflets resembling a lace-like umbrella. Grown primarily for their foliage, they do bloom from time to time. The three species I have in the garden are *A. konjac, A. bulbifer,* and *A. paeoniifolius. A. konjac* has a mottled stalk and blooms reliably. The flower can be five feet tall and literally smells of dead rats for a few days. The unique feature of *A. bulbifer* is one of its means of propagation. It makes bulbils on top of the leaf. The bloom of *A. bulbifer* only gets 18 inches tall, but is quite pleasant to look at. Its spathe is a creamy pink with a rich red center. *A. paeoniifolius* has the largest stature of the three, and the leaf stalk is mottled with varying shades of green and white spots as well as being covered with thousands of little bumps.

No 'tropical-appearing' garden is complete without a voodoo lily, *Sauromatum guttatum.* Perfect candidates for the shady edge of the tropical-appearing garden, Sauromatums may reach a height of two to three feet. The leaf stalks have a mottled pattern topped off with a pedate leaf. They send up their foul-smelling flowers in advance of the leaves and propagate themselves by making offsets on the parent bulb, thereby making a nice clump after only a couple of years.

The final addition to the tropical-appearing garden should be the calla lily (*Zantedeschia*). Grown for both its foliage and beautiful flowers, this aroid is not picky about its habitat. It can be grown in full sun or light shade, in the perennial border or the water garden. A favorite in the wedding bouquet is *Z. aethiopica*, with its large pure white spathes; but there are a multitude of different colored calla lilies on the market today with both solid and white spotted leaves. *Z. elliottiana,* with its golden yellow spathes is absolutely stunning when planted next to the pink-spathed *Z. rehmannii.* These calla lilies as well as others have reliably multipled very quickly in my garden in Raleigh.

**Summary.** How many times have you asked a dedicated gardener if they grow a particular type of plant and they reply that they have already gone through that phase? For many gardeners, aroids turn out to be much more than a passing phase; they can be a lifetime attraction. I, for one, will never tire of waiting in anticipation for an *Amorophallus konjac* to send up its gigantic inflorescence in May or for that beautiful pink spathe of *Arisaema candidissimum* to unfurl in June.

Are you still interested in aroids? If so, you may wish to contact a couple of our own local NARGS members. Tony Avent of Plant Delights Nursery carries several aroids mentioned in this article. Also, arisaema enthusiasts should contact George R. Stilwell. George has formed a membership group for this special genus. He can be contacted at 11900 Coachman's Way, Raleigh, NC 27614.

For those with access to e-mail, there is an electronic discussion group on the Internet set up to provide a forum for collectors, academics, and hobbyists interested in aroids. To subscribe: send a message to: *listproc@mobot.org* (no subject); body of text should read as follows: *Sub aroid-l firstname surname*

Unfortunately, there are few references on the Araceae. One that I use often and that is an excellent source of information on the aroid family is *Aroids —Plants of the Arum Family* by Deni Brown published in 1988 (Timber Press, Portland, OR).

*Alan Galloway is a native of North Carolina and gardens in Raleigh. He grows a varied array of plants with partner, Stan Barone.*

**1996 Events of interest to members of NARGS**

**February 2 - 4, 1996. Eastern Study Weekend.** New England Chapter, North American Rock Garden Society. "Growing Pains." Sheraton Tara Hotel, Framingham, Massachusetts. Please note that as of November 23rd, only 36 openings were left for the Eastern Study Weekend. It appears that registration will be closed by the time you receive this newsletter. Once maximum capacity is reached, people will be put on a waiting list in case someone cancels. If you are interested in attending, you should immediately send your registration fee ($125 for NARGS members) to John Jaques, 73 Mt. Vernon Street, West Roxbury, MA 02132. No phone reservations are accepted.

**March 1 - 3, 1996. Western Study Weekend.** Victoria Rock and Alpine Garden Society (VIRAGS). "Challenge 75." Empress Hotel, Victoria, British Columbia, Canada. This meeting also will be a celebration of the Victoria Rock and Alpine Garden Society's 75th Anniversary.

**July 11-13, 1996. NARGS National Annual Meeting.** Wasatch Chapter, NARGS. "Utah Flora '96." Cliff Lodge, Snowbird, Utah.

## *Membership lists available*

The names, addresses, and phone numbers of your fellow gardeners in the Piedmont Chapter of NARGS are available on our chapter's membership list. If you would like a current copy of the list, please contact our treasurer:

Bob Wilder
1213 Dixie Trail
Raleigh, NC 27607
phone (919) 781-2255
e-mail *wilder@nando.net*

## *Arisaema candidissimum*

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Barbara Scott (919) 859-6703.

## An English garden writing addiction *by Roy C. Dicks*

My current obsession with English writer Beverley Nichols is all J. C. Raulston's fault. He was the one who suggested I read Nichols's most famous gardening book, *Down the Garden Path*, and then loaned me a biography about him. My fascination took quick root, and soon I was on my way to collecting all 54 books that Nichols wrote, including twelve gardening titles.

Reading these gardening-related works made me easily understand what made Nichols a multi-bestselling author in his time (1898-1983). His combination of pithy wit, hard-won practical advice, and poetical musings on garden plants and their profound effect on him provide such irresistible quotes as, " It will be generally agreed that the only way in which we can appreciate the beauty of snowdrops is by going out into the garden, lying flat on our backs in the mud, and gazing up at them from below," and "The great majority of flowers in my garden are in their present places because they have personally informed me, in the clearest possible tones, that this is where they wish to be. Listening to flowers is one of the most important of all the gardener's duties."

Nichols was already the author of nine books and numerous newspaper and magazine articles when he decided to "get away from it all" by purchasing a small Tudor-era cottage about sixty miles north of London in 1928. As a complete novice gardener, he learned, over the following three years, by trial and error, how to make a garden. His failures and successes and his increasing enchantment with all flowers and plants were chronicled in *Down the Garden Path*, which, due to the phenomenal public reaction, was quickly followed by two more titles about his cottage and garden, *A Thatched Roof* and *A Village in a Valley*. As he moved to other locations in and around London during his life, he wrote of his developing a garden at each site (*Green Grows the City*, the *Merry Hall* trilogy, and the *Garden Open* set). He also wrote three other garden titles, in amongst novels, children's books, plays, and numerous nonfiction works.

Much of the appeal of these gardening titles comes from his particular way with words, mixing the actions and reactions of the common gardener with flights of literary fancy and dry, British humor to produce such thought-provoking statements as, "The design a gardener imposes must be constantly modified and sometimes totally transformed by a hand stronger than his own—the hand of Nature. Maybe the art of gardening is simply the knowledge of how to hold that hand, and how to clasp it in friendship."

For those gardeners who spend most of their reading time consulting manuals of technique and dictionaries of nomenclature, the garden writings of Beverley Nichols can be a refreshing change of pace. Although most of his titles are currently out of print and available only in used bookstores and libraries, Nichols's works are worth seeking out for their salutary effect on the gardener.

*Piedmont Chapter member Roy Dicks will give a lecture and reading on Beverley Nichols to the Friends of the NCSU Arboretum in 159 Kilgore Hall, NCSU Campus, at 8:00 p.m. on January 17, 1996. He has recently returned from England where he visited the four Beverley Nichols home sites. NARGS Piedmont Chapter members are invited to the lecture.*

## Cyclamen serendipity

*by Brian Mathew*

When I gave a talk on cyclamen some years ago, I said that all the species were fairly easy to identify (and that is, I think, largely the case) and that there were unlikely to be any new discoveries, so I have now to eat my words. The discovery of *C. somalense* is very surprising, of course, but perhaps not so extraordinary when one considers that, in Somalia, there are other known links with the Mediterranean flora, presumably relics of a time when that climatic zone was much more widespread. In view of the fact that a cyclamen has turned up there, it would be perhaps not quite so amazing if the genus were to turn up on those island mountains much farther to the west, in the Sahara, such as Tibesti (this is not to be taken as an offer to go and look!) and the Hoggar Mountains; although in a very hot dry region, the former has several peaks between 3,000 and 3,500 metres (9,840 to 11,500 ft). It is also possible that cyclamen might turn up in the south-east corner of the Arabian Peninsula opposite Somalia—in Yemen or western Saudi Arabia—where there is an interesting mix of the floras of the Middle East and Africa.

This Mediterranean type of climate, with cool wet winters and warm dry summers, is not confined to the Mediterranean region itself; other notable areas with a similar climate are the Southwest Cape in South Africa, California, and the western slopes of the Andes, particularly Chile. In each of these regions, there are a great many "bulbous" plants with some form of swollen underground storage organ by which means they survive the adverse dry period in summer. There are other ways of dealing with these conditions, and, in these regions, there are also many annuals (which exist as seeds through the adverse period), compact shrubs with small tough leaves, and ground-hugging or cushion-like plants which reduce water loss to a minimum.

***To the Cyclamen***

*Thou cyclamen of crumpled horn*
*Toss not thy head aside;*
*Repose it where the Loves were born,*
*In that warm dell abide.*
*Whatever flowers, on mountain, field,*
*Or garden, may arise,*
*Thine only that pure odor yield*
*Which never can suffice.*
*Emblem of her I've loved so long,*
*Go, carry her this little song.*

Walter Savage Landor
1775-1864

Most of those plants which have developed fleshy storage organs—bulbs, corms, tubers, and rhizomes—in these areas are monocotyledons, especially belonging to the families Iridaceae, Amaryllidaceae, and Liliaceae (in the wide sense). However, a few dicotyledons have also developed storage organs, mostly tubers, and those which immediately come to mind are *Eranthis* and some *Anemone* species (Ranunculaceae), *Oxalis* (Oxalidaceae), *Leontice,* and *Gymnospermium* (Berberidaceae) , a few *Geranium* species, and, of course, the whole genus *Cyclamen* (Primulaceae). Therefore, our beloved genus could be taken as one of the few successful attempts by the dicotyledons to move in on the preserves of the "bulbous" monocotyledons.

Quite a lot of dicotyledons have a rhizomatous habit, including several other Primulaceae such as *Soldanella* and *Primula*. The primrose is well worth an inspection, choosing a plant which is several years old and in need of division; usually there is a well developed rhizome—a modified stem—bearing leaf scars from previous seasons' rosettes, and this has a marked similarity to the "floral trunk" of an old cyclamen which has been growing deeply. I think it is therefor safe to assume that the cyclamen storage organ is best regarded as a stem-derived tuber, certainly not a corm or bulb.

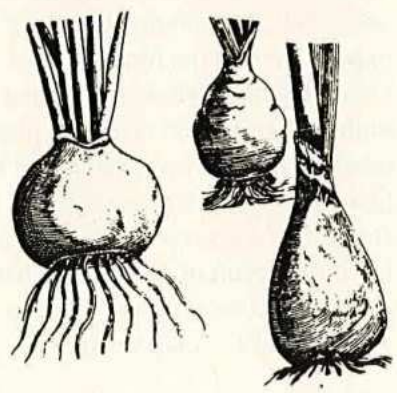
Cyclamen avoid, on the whole, the harsher climates within the whole of the winter rainfall region of the Mediterranean and western Asia, either keeping to the lower altitudes or occurring in woods and forests. The only species which occur right out in the open at higher altitudes are, in my experience, *C. parviflorum* and, to a lesser extent, *C. coum* and *C.*

*trochopteranthum*. Cyclamen avoid, for example, the whole of the Anatolian Plateau in Turkey, which has a very hard climate with a long dry summer and snowy winter with temperatures of -35 to -40 degrees C (-30 to -40 degrees F) quite the norm. *C. parviflorum* grows on the Black Sea coast side (the northern side) of the Pontus Mountains (and the other mountains within the influence of the Black Sea) up through the woods to the alpine meadows, but it barely crosses over the ridges to the plateau side where the climate changes suddenly and dramatically from the softer moister conditions on the seaward side.

On the whole, it can be said that, where cyclamen do occur in this whole Eurasian winter rainfall region, they are the representatives of the family Primulaceae, replacing *Primula*, although there are overlap areas where it is possible to find both genera occurring together, for example in the Black Sea and Caspian Sea woods. The main difference between them is that *Cyclamen* has evolved to lie leafless and semi-dormant in the heat of the summer, then react to the falling temperature and increasing moisture in autumn with renewed root growth; some, of course, flower straight away in autumn, others delay until later in the season. Most species in the much more widespread (Europe-Asia-North America) genus *Primula* are the reverse, growing in areas where there is a supply of summer moisture (especially in mountain regions and the monsoon areas of the Himalaya and eastern Asia); they react to increasing temperatures, coming into growth in spring and flowering in spring or summer. There are a few exceptions, of course, (the plant world *would* be dull if there were no exceptions!), and I am thinking in particular of the Central Asiatic *P. fedtschenkoana*; this grows in dry-summer areas together with fritillaries and crocuses and behaves somewhat like a bulbous plant in that it has a cluster of fleshy roots, almost like those of *Ranunculus ficaria*, and dies down completely for the summer months after flowering in spring. The European primrose can also die back to some extent during a dry summer, surviving by means of a fleshy rhizome.

It is difficult to decide which of the species of cyclamen one would not like to be without, but I suppose that *C. hederifolium* would have to get the vote since it is such a superb garden plant. However, *C. trochopteranthum* (such a euphonious name!) is a particular favourite, perhaps, in part, because it grows in such attractive situations in southern Turkey and because I was working at Wisley with Ken Aslet at a time when there were large numbers of "bulbs" in the alpine department from the Turkish collections of Peter Davis, including pans of a very variable cyclamen labeled "*C. alpinum*." As I remember, there were several numbers, including PD 25618, and they varied from white to a strong pink. Much more recently, in 1989, I accompanied a European Community (EC) working party to Turkey, looking at the trade in bulbous plants with a view to recommending a reduction in quotas (imported from Turkey into the EC) of collected *Cyclamen* and *Galanthus*; one of the species we looked at in the wild was *C. trochopteranthum*. This proved to be quite a bit more widespread than I had thought but, even so, much more restricted than the very widespread and common *C. cilicium* which would be difficult to exterminate by collecting—not that there is any need at all for commercial collecting of cyclamen in view of their ease of propagation.

One particularly striking leaf form of *C. trochopteranthum* was selected and brought back for cultivation at Kew (BM 11080). While on this cyclamen foray, I saw many *C. cilicium* and *C. mirabile* and took a few samples of each. In view of their great similarity in other respects, I was not really prepared for the marked difference between the two in their underground parts, not so much in the ultimate shape of the tubers, which does differ, but in the consistency in the positioning of the roots; in *C. cilicium,* they arise from the centre underside whereas in *C. mirabile*, although they do emerge in the lower part of the tuber, they form a ring above the base, leaving a small bare area of tuber right at the bottom. This was uniform behaviour in the wild



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specimens; although the numbers collected were not large, the sample was completely random, so I am fairly happy that this is a constant feature—well, as constant as any feature is likely to be in this variable genus!

An attractive leaf form of *C. mirabile* was also selected out (BM 11120), and this is also cultivated at Kew. One of the great joys of looking at plants in the wild, even within well known species, is in hunting for the unusual; although, as a botanist, my inclination is to try to ascertain what is the standard for a particular species, rather than how many aberrant ones there are which do not fit. There is an undeniable urge to track down these curiosities. Thus, these two variants with their uncharacteristic leaf patterns were duly introduced, as was a silver-leafed *C. graecum* from the seaside resort of Glyfada near Athens.

While working at Wisley in the early 1960s, I also had the fun of helping with the receipt and distribution of the Paul and Polly Furse collections from their expeditions to Iran and Afghanistan. Their enthusiasm was most infectious; and a year later, in 1963, the Bowles Scholarship Botanical Expedition (BSBE) trip to Iran took place, involving four Wisley students—myself, Stuart Baker, David Barter, and David Pycraft. The rather pretentious title of the BSBE to Iran acknowledged the fact that a large slice of the funding came from the RHS in the form of a travel scholarship in memory of E. A. Bowles, and that we hoped to do something useful botanically. A memorable part of that expedition was the foray into the Caspian woods where there are a few bulbs—it is just too wet for a plant to need a bulb; however, as on the Black Sea coast, Cyclamen are there in the form of *C. elegans* which may or may not be a variant of *C. coum;* it has been treated as a species and as a synonym of *C. coum* subsp. *caucasicum*. In places, this was a very common plant over a wide altitude range from sea level (about 25 m. or 80 ft. below normal sea level) upwards to 1,520 m. (5,000 ft), perhaps more; the most frequent habitat in which it was seen was on mossy banks and rotting logs, although it could also be found as an epiphyte on the mossy branches of trees—a most attractive sight. The overall impression of *C. elegans* is of a rather large-flowered plant—our field notes for no. 560 at Astara remark that the flowers were "as large as *C. pseudibericum*," but the shape is perhaps more reminiscent of *C. libanoticum*, although smaller and without the same mouth markings; the leaves have a pointed heart-shape such as one might expect at the extreme end of variation of *C. coum* subsp. *caucasicum*.

Another of the BSBE collections, no. 812, collected on the Karadj to Chalus road at 1,520 m (5,000 ft), was noted as "having a curious leaf pattern, a deep silvery green all over." C. elegans was formally described as a species in 1860, so the plant had already been known for 100 years when Paul Furse took [a] photograph [of it]. However, it is likely that, in the mid-nineteenth century, less was known about the range of variation of the species of cyclamen than today; and in view of the current state of knowledge, it probably makes more sense to regard *C. elegans* as a part of the *C. coum* complex since it does have most features in common with that species, and the distribution is also an extension of that of *C. coum*, via the Caucasus. The *C. coum* subsp. *coum* (rounded leaf) versus subsp. *caucasicum* debate will probably continue (dare I say forever) since there is probably no satisfactory answer; not all plants are attributable to one or the other, but, at the same time, it appears unsatisfactory to lump them all under one name. My only comment is that Peter Davis, the driving force behind the impressive Flora of Turkey project whose opinions I always valued greatly, used to say that, in "overlapping" situations such as this (and they are encountered very frequently), the category of subspecies is the appropriate one to use. In fact, I have encountered this sort of situation so frequently in the various plant groups I have studied in my career that I have often felt in need of some cyclamen juice, which is recommended by Theophrastus for "purgings of the head"!

*Brian Mathew, who lives in Claygate, Surrey, UK, is author of several books including those on iris, hellebores, crocus, other bulbous plants, and lilies. This article originally appeared in Cyclamen 19:1 (June 1995), p. 14 - 16. It is reprinted with Mr. Mathew's permission.*

**"Growing Pains" attendees**

Andy Warhol once said that everyone has fifteen minutes of fame in their lifetime. We can't offer 15 minutes, but anyone attending the 1996 Eastern Winter Study Weekend, "Growing Pains," can have five minutes of fame. An open projector session has been added on Friday night, February 2nd. During this optional hour, any attendees will be free to sign up to show slides for five minutes on any rock garden related topic: plants, gardens, construction, and so forth. If you are coming to Framingham, Massachusetts, in February, why not bring a half-dozen slides and join in the fun?

*The information in this note came from the organizers of the Eastern Winter Study Weekend. e-mail to* JRugh1@aol.com

October 16, 1995

**Dear Friends,**

Thank you! These are the first words I write on my computer here in California. I just unearthed the pieces from the many cartons stacked here in my study, and, piece by piece, it works—even the printer. Next comes the modem. When we establish an e-mail address, I will let you know it also.

You touched my heart when you made me a permanent member of the Piedmont Chapter. I am so proud of our chapter! A decade ago, when we began with a modest meeting of 25 people, Nancy Goodwin, Edith Boyer, and I dreamed of an active chapter. We hoped to bring together all the keen gardeners in the area, to savor exciting programs, and to share our plants and our expertise.

To my delight, our chapter is just getting better and better. We number more than 200 members (welcoming both novice and expert), the programs continue to be outstanding, and our annual plant sales plus the wildly amusing and competitive monthly auction of rare plants promote the distribution of plants that are outstanding candidates for Piedmont rock gardens.

Ray and I wish each of you joyful gardening. We will eagerly anticipate each issue of *The Trillium* and remember the rich, warm fellowship of our chapter meetings as we read about current activities. Again, thank you!

Our new/old home is 74 Paseo Hermoso, Salinas, CA 93908, phone (408) 484-5244. We will welcome note and calls now; visitors when we have created a bit more harmony and sanity here.

Affectionately,

*Sande and Ray Ladendorf*

## Your words wanted

Your gardening experiences might be interesting and informative to members of the Piedmont Chapter. If you have ideas for an article in *The Trillium* based on your experiences with particular plants or unusual sites, or both, please contact Bobby Ward, editor, or Barbara Scott, interim editor. Their phone numbers, addresses, and e-mail addresses are noted on page 6 of this newsletter. Let us hear from you.



### Who are we?

The Piedmont Chapter of the North American Rock Garden Society (NARGS) is located in the Triangle area of North Carolina, which includes Chapel Hill, Durham, and Raleigh, North Carolina. The chapter meets on the third Saturday of the following months: September, October, November, January, February, and March. Each meeting includes a brief business session, a presentation by a speaker, and a plant auction. Except as noted, meetings are held at 10 a.m. in the Totten Center at the North Carolina Botanical Garden in Chapel Hill, N. C.

The chapter's regular activities also include a seedling plant sale to members at its September meeting, a spring garden tour (which usually occurs in April or May), and an annual spring covered-dish picnic and meeting (which customarily occurs in May). The chapter also publishes *The Trillium,* a newsletter which is distributed to all members on the first of July, September, November, January, and March.

The annual membership fee for the Piedmont Chapter is $10 for an individual and $15 for a household. (Household memberships receive a single copy of *The Trillium.*) To join the Piedmont Chapter or to renew memberships, send a check for the appropriate amount to the chapter treasurer, Bob Wilder, at the following address: 1213 Dixie Trail, Raleigh, N. C. 27607.

The North American Rock Garden Society has an annual membership fee of $25, which includes a subscription to the quarterly *Bulletin,* an annual seed exchange, opportunities to attend national meetings, and NARGS book store purchases at reduced prices. To join the national society, your check for $25 made payable to "NARGS" can be sent to the Piedmont Chapter treasurer, who will forward it to the national executive secretary.

A list of the chapter's board members and their addresses is provided on pages 6 and 7 of this newsletter. Please contact a board member if you have questions about the chapter or if you wish to make comments about its activities.

**Piedmont Chapter Upcoming Meetings.** Chapter meetings are held in the Totten Center at the UNC Botanical Garden in Chapel Hill, N. C.

**January 20, 1996, Saturday, 10:00 a.m.**
**The Little Bulbs** ***Nancy Goodwin, Hillsborough, North Carolina***
Members whose last names begin with the letters **A through H** should bring refreshments to the meeting.

**February 17, 1996, Saturday, 10:00 a.m.**
**Native Orchids and Smaller Wildflowers of North Carolina** ***George Pyne, Durham, North Carolina***
Members whose last names begin with the letters I through Q should bring refreshments to the meeting.

**March 16, 1996, Saturday, 10:00 a.m.**
**Rock Gardening in the South** ***Mildred Pinell, Atlanta Botanical Garden, Atlanta, Georgia***
Members whose last names begin with the letters R through Z should bring refreshments to the meeting.

**Upcoming Event.** Chapter member Roy Dicks will present a lecture and reading on the garden writings of English author Beverley Nichols as part of the Friends of the NCSU Arboretum lecture series.

**January 17, 1996, Wednesday, 8:00 p.m.**
**The Gardening Wit and Wisdom of Beverley Nichols** ***Roy Dicks***
**159 Kilgore Hall, NCSU Campus, Raleigh, N. C.**

**Please note** that this lecture will take place in a different building than Bostian Hall, the usual location for the Arboretum's lecture series. The lecture will be held in Kilgore Hall, which faces Hillsborough Street just west of Bostian Hall. NARGS members are invited.

***The Trillium***
**Piedmont Chapter**
**The North American Rock Garden Society**
**Barbara Scott, Interim Editor**
**1321 Chaney Road**
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**FIRST CLASS**

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Mailed December 26, 1995