



The Trillium

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

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September 1999

A Pallet of Hot Salvias

by Richard Dufresne

Naming colors is a somewhat subjective business. Colors are like odors: verbal characterizations are loaded with impressions. The Greeks didn't have a word for blue until later in their civilization, as I recall. Their colors ranged from green to violet initially. Since we try to make the visible part of the continuous electromagnetic spectrum into a loop for artistic and other conceptual purposes, we are bound to have problems with red (hot)/blue (cold) color balances. This is why getting true blues in any media is difficult, and why such colors in flowers are really fascinating to me. Add to this that the "hot" colors actually represent colder radiation, and the so-called "cold" colors are really higher-energy radiation, going into ultraviolet, X-rays, and gamma rays. The scientific and artistic mysteries of color account for a large part of my interest in Salvias.

First, a word about color terms. "Hue" is the variation in color based on its position in the visible spectrum (from red, orange, yellow, green, blue, to purple). "Luminosity" refers to the intensity of the color. One end of the spectrum is pure black, the other pure white, and the absolute mid-point is the pure color. The more light, the more luminous (light) the color.

Odd color forms are usually a sign of hybridization, resulting in two pigments being present, often distributed differently within the flowers. For example, all orange *S. greggii*s are probably hybrids, as are the non-true blue section *Flocculosae-greggii* relatives currently in the trade labeled as *S. muelleri* and *S. coahuilensis*. Since true orange pigments in nature are rare, most oranges are mixtures of red anthocya-

Continued on page 2

An Appreciation

by Betsy Clebsch

The Gardener's Guide to Growing Salvias by John Sutton, 1999. Timber Press, Portland, OR. 160 pages incl. index and color photographs, \$29.95 list price. Available to NARGS (national) members at \$24 from NARGS Book Service.

Planning and taking a trip involves many preliminary and pleasurable steps. For instance, one of the first things to be done is to find a map and a book that will help us get where we want to go. But where do we want to go once we get there? After looking at available information, more likely than not, we will discover we need at least two guide books. Then, thanks to serendipity, a beautifully illustrated book on the subject comes our way and is of great help as well. By now, I am sure you will understand my point. The more books and information we have on a subject the more readily we can focus our attention and learn from other people's points of view. John Sutton's new work, *The Gardener's Guide to Growing Salvias*, helps in various ways to enhance our knowl-

Continued on page 7

Our September meeting of the NARGS
Saturday, September 18, 1999
10:00 a.m., Totten Center
N.C. Botanical Garden, Chapel Hill, N.C.
"The Genus Salvia"
Richard Dufresne
Greensboro, North Carolina
Also Fall Seedling Sale

Members with last name beginning "A" through "H"
bring goodies.

nin with a yellow xanthophyll, an entirely different class of compounds. There are genuine purple anthocyanins, however. "By their colors ye shall know them."

The colors blue and purple are especially troublesome descriptively, and therefore fascinating. In a recent e-mail discussion on *Salvia patens*, I analyzed the color of a scanned flower of the cultivar Cambridge Blue using my Adobe Photoshop tools: the RGB color channels indicate an excess of about 10% of green as compared to red. The species is the same hue, but darker. It isn't really indigo or Prussian blue in my mind, since these colors have noticeable amounts of red in them; cobalt blue might be closer. The deep azure blue of the copper mineral azurite is the purest dark blue I know, once having had my breath taken away on viewing a crystal of this mineral held up to the light. Seeing the flowers of *S. patens* always brings this memory back to me. No doubt, many will say something similar about their favorite *Meconopsis* or *Gentiana*.

A similar situation exists with red and magenta. I can have trouble getting anyone to understand the differences between these hues. If they are familiar with *Salvias*, I can usually get the color concepts across by referencing them to their experiences with *Salvias*. As with their blue-colored cousins, the red/magenta sage flowers are often primally and prismatically pure. Here are some of the differences.

From readings and observations made on my *Salvia* collection and their spontaneous hybrids, there appear to be two different anthocyanin pigments (or groups of closely related pigments) in *Salvia*—a red one and a fuchsia one. These pigments are present at various degrees of concentration in different parts of flower tissues and hairs. Beyond this simple difference, I believe the subtle apparent variations of hue are caused by variations in flower morphology, especially in the size, shapes, arrangements, densities, and distributions of colored hairs.

Rose is about the same hue as magenta, but it has a higher luminosity (that is, it is diluted closer to white than the pure color at mid-range). Fuchsia has a lower luminosity (darker) than magenta, and may have a more purple hue. True pink should be the same hue as pure red (no purple at all) at a higher luminosity. First, the purpley-red sages; pink and red sages follow later.

Here are some good rose(Ro), magenta(M), and fuchsia(F) *salvias* to consider for your pallet of *salvia*

colors in the garden:

S. microphylla forms (these are tougher than *greggii* forms and handle humidity better - however, they are much bigger plants):

Wild Watermelon (Ro) - My introduction (from the same gene pool as cv. 'Rosita', collected by Don Mahoney high up Cerro Potosi in Nuevo Leon, Mexico). A tough, robust, cold-hardy form with huge flowers that are quite lax.

La Trinidad Pink (Ro) - A Yucca Do Nursery (Texas) introduction. A tough, robust, cold-hardy form with large flowers with rhizomes, 4 feet tall

Dieciocho de Marzo (M) - A Yucca Do introduction. Tall, dense erect shrub with many thin, woody stems. Free bloomer.

San Carlos Festival (F) - A Yucca Do introduction. Medium-high bushy sage with great tolerance to wet and dry, cold and hot conditions. Grows more like a rose or raspberry, forming wood that explodes in growth at the ends and the base.

var. *neurepia* (M) - A Yucca Do introduction. A tall, fast-growing form with salmony flowers and aromatic foliage.

Hoja Grande (M) - A Yucca Do introduction. Like the above, but taller and not as fast growing.

S. greggii forms (all but the first two of these are hybrids with *microphylla* forms having hybrid vigor and tolerance):

Big Pink: (Ro) - A Yucca Do introduction. An erect, double-sized flowering form. Robust grower to 3.5 feet.

Dwarf Pink: (Ro) - A Yucca Do introduction. The smallest of the *greggii*s, spreading more than Furman's red, but otherwise similar. Flowers about 3/4 normal size.

Raspberry Royale (F) - My introduction. Hybrid of alba *Salvia greggii* with *S. lemmonii*. Spreads and forms a dense clump with lots of medium-sized flowers. Relatively low maintenance.

Dark Dancer (F) - A Nevin Smith introduction.

Double-sized flowers like the above, fewer but thicker stems

Plum Wine (Ro) - My introduction. Like Raspberry Royale, but lighter in color, like a fruit wine.

Salvia puberula/S. involucrata forms:

S. involucrata cv. 'Bethelii' (M) - The old standard and the most erect of the group. Large involucre at end of spike. All of these plants tend to have burgundy veins and fine dentate teeth on their leaves.

S. involucrata cv. 'Hadspen' (M) - Atypical in several ways: the first to bloom, and flowers will persist a lot longer on stems. Involucre much reduced in size and elongated. Stems not erect, often undulate enough to touch ground and root. Of European origin, brought into USA by Wave Hill

S. involucrata x cv. 'Mulberry Jam' (F) - A Betsy Clebsch (from California) introduction. The most erect, in habit like *S. uliginosa* or *Verbena bonariensis* with very etiolated stems. Flower looks more like a *S. chiapensis* with shorter tube and larger lips.

S. puberula from Hidalgo (M) - Originally distributed by me at UC Berkeley as *S. involucrata* before I realized it came from the TYPE locality for the species. The species name comes from the hairy leaves on plants soon after they break dormancy. Involucrata plants break out with smooth leaves.

Fairly erect, but stems come out at an angle. The hardiest of these forms and the second to bloom.

S. puberula cv. 'El Butano' (M) - A Yucca Do introduction. Extra large plants with the largest leaves in this group that stay hairy, late to bloom.

S. puberula cv. from Yucca-Do (M) - Very similar to Hidalgo form, smaller involucre of bracts (rosebud)

S. puberula x *karwinskii* - (Carmine) - a spontaneous hybrid from U.C. Berkeley of the Hidalgo form I gave them with their *S. karwinskii*. Hairy leaves and very tall (would you believe 12 feet in one year?) Very long, showy spikes.

Tropical sages:

Salvia chiapensis: (F) - ground cover and container plant with lots of medium spikes of 0.5 inch fuchsia flowers. This species has nice glossy foliage.

S. buehneri: (F) - Big (2 inch) furry, showy flower, almost twice the size of the dark green glossy, tidy foliage. Forms nice, dense clumps and is a superb container plant. Sun or shade, blooms all summer and fall.

S. iodes: (F) - Three forms available here. Showiest is the Louis Saso cultivar (but tenderest and last to bloom) with long, lush spikes, followed by the Huntington Botanical Garden (California) strain, with truncated dense spikes topped by an atypic symmetrical determinate flower, finally the hardiest Southwest Native Seed (Sally Walker, Arizona) form (blooms earliest and the hardiest strain, but with an open spike). All have ornamental foliage that is purple growing in sun. These can get 5+ feet tall.

S. littae: (F) - Flowers like half-sized *buehneri* on spikes like those of *elegans*. Can spread and also grow 5+ feet tall. Spikes can grow 18 inches long. There are at least two forms, both collected by Dennis Breedlove and friends.

S. dorisiana: (Ro) - A relatively new sage from Honduras with big, hairy heart-shaped, medium green leaves; it is really a short-day plant and needs a cool, bright greenhouse to bloom. Don't leave the lights on at night for long periods, or you'll miss the huge (3 inch) flowers. This is a tall plant (8 feet).

True pink should be the same hue as pure red (no purple at all) at a higher luminosity; this color is quite rare. The only one in general release I know of is actually a medium red (Zaragoza). True red *Salvias* are common, including the ubiquitous *S. splendens*.

And now, here are the true red sages (Re) and true pink (P) sages:

I've clustered these plants into several convenient groups.

The greggii and microphylla sages:

Salvia greggii cv. Cherry Red: (Re) - From Mexico, sold most often in Arizona. This one handles heat fairly well. Flowers are slightly on the orange side. Shrubby habit to 3 feet.

S. greggii cv. Furman's Red: (Re) - From Kerrville, Texas. The second-most compact *greggii*, and pretty darned tolerant of growing conditions (heat, humidity).

S. greggii x *grahamii* cv. Maraschino: (Re) - My introduction. A cross of Furman's Red with a *S. grahamii* (*S. microphylla*). Has hybrid vigor, very floriferous, tolerates shade well.

S. greggii x *microphylla* cv. Cherry Chief: (Re) - My introduction. Like the above, but is better in heat. A cross of Furman's Red with the deltoid-leaved *S. microphylla* from Hidalgo. Has hybrid vigor, very floriferous, tolerates sun well.

S. greggii x *blepharophylla*? cv. Cherry Queen: (Re) - My introduction. This one is also tolerant of various conditions. It is a rambler with glossy bright leaves matched in intensity and texture with its flowers, a perfect contrast of pure green and red. In other words, the colors of Christmas decorations.

S. microphylla deltoid-leaved from Hidalgo (Mexico): (Re) - My introduction. Collected with Manuel Flores during a wickedly hot drought during the Easter season. It was found at a lower than usual elevation, and was in bloom. Turns out, it blooms pretty well during our steamy hot summers. It does get at least 4 feet tall.

S. microphylla cv. Red Velvet: (Re) - A Yucca Do & Scott Ogden (Texas) introduction. Has the biggest flowers of any true red *greggii*/microphylla. Glossy leaves with open architecture to 5 feet tall. It is a bit lanky at first, but fills itself in nicely.

S. microphylla cv. Zaragoza: (medium Re) - A Yucca Do introduction. The medium red form with average size and a nice habit. The flowers have a habit of washing out as they age to give a multicolored effect, more so than most of its cousins.

S. microphylla, Southwest Native Seed red form: - The most compact form of this species. Neat, dense

shrubby habit with neat green leaves and many smallish red flowers.

Eyelash-leaved Sages (*S. blepharophylla*):

Salvia blepharophylla (old fashioned form): (Re) - This is the oldest, and the easiest to propagate, of unknown provenance. This form is missing the edge hairs on its leaves. It has been reliably persistent in my garden (zone 7b).

S. blepharophylla cv. Diablo: (Re) - A Yucca Do introduction. This selection has flowers with protruding anthers covered with yellow pollen, giving the blooms the appearance of two 'horns', hence the name. This is the smallest of the forms.

S. blepharophylla cv. Dulces Nombres: (Re) - A Yucca Do introduction. From the type location in Nuevo Leon (Mexico). It has ample hairs on the leaf edges and stems. Harder to propagate than most, but worth growing; the flowers are more brilliant than the previous two. It has survived a number of winters.

S. blepharophylla cv. Painted Ladies: (Re) - A Yucca Do introduction. Similar in habit to 'Diablo', but with larger foliage and flowers. Relatively easy to propagate.

Pineapple sage and cousins:

Salvia elegans (*S. rutilans*) - Pineapple Sage: (Re) - The old standard, of unknown provenance. Blooms late with brilliant red tubular flowers. Layers itself into a good sized patch. Long used to make herbal teas. The pineapple odor is unusual, and the components that produce it are as of yet unidentified. Hardy in zone 7b with mulch.

S. elegans (*S. rutilans*) cv. Frieda Dixon: (Re) - A sport of the above, with a slightly smaller habit and vigor. The flowers are also a bit smaller, with a lighter salmon cast.

S. elegans (Honey Melon Sage): (Re) - A Huntington Botanic Garden introduction. This one is more compact, has shorter leaves, and a scent like a cantaloupe. The flowers are about the same as pineapple sage. Likes shade and moisture in summer.

S. elegans, creeping form: (Re) - A Manuel Flores

introduction. From a high-altitude area in Guerrero or Michoacan. This one is a rapid spreader and can handle light frosts better than other forms. Flowers are about the same as the others. The foliage is small and noticeably hairier than the other forms.

The scarlet sages:

Salvia coccinea: (Re) - A common plant with many forms. Self-sows and will come true as long as other variants aren't present. There are some very compact forms. Also, there are coral/shrimp/white color sports.

S. hirtella: (Re) - A high-elevation plant from Ecuador that likes moisture. The flower heads are a lot like those of *S. coccinea*. This species will spread by rooting its trailing stems. Old basal growth is likely to die back, so this plant needs to move around. Tender in zone 7.

Large Tropical Sages:

Salvia pulchella: (Re) - A rampant grower for medium shade. It has foliage like *S. dorisiana* in size, shape, and scent, but is more rugose and not as hairy. Its habit is more prostrate. The bracts of the involucre mimic calyxes in shape. The tight cluster of fuzzy red tubular flowers is a bit hidden in the foliage, but worth searching for.

S. miniata: (Re) - A Huntington Botanic Garden introduction, I believe. About 4 feet tall when mature, it has glossy long foliage and has evolved to become a good shade plant in hot, humid areas. The crimson flowers are produced all warm months of the year. It makes an excellent container plant for a deck..

S. gesneraeflora: (Re) - A 10 - 15 foot giant when mature, best for zone 8b and warmer. This cultivar has brown calyxes to go with its 3-inch flowers. With a little shade and protection from wind, it will make a striking background plant. When in bloom, it will have a swarm of hummingbirds around it.

S. dombeyi: (Re) - Similar to *S. gesneraeflora*, but native to upper elevations of the Andes in Peru and Bolivia. It has the largest flowers of the mint family, 5+ inches long, and a 1.5 inch deep purple calyx. Success in growing it depends on its being able to grow up through foliage at clearings. When it gets sufficiently high, it spills out into sunlight and droops

down with its flowers. This is the only *Salvia* I know that thinks it is a grape vine (no tendrils, though).

S. disjuncta: (Re) - the new form collected by Dennis Breedlove, the old one distributed by Logee's Greenhouses. This prostrate spreader has red tubular flowers and does well in hanging baskets or as a bedding plant in sun or light shade. The older plant is more compact. It blooms during short days and is hardy in zone 8b.

S. fulgens: (Re) - This one is very similar to *S. gesneraeflora* and can be confused with it. The normal form has large, heart-shaped leaves and differs on first inspection only in variations in size and calyx color. There are a number of unusual forms; many of these need to be reexamined for status. Hardy in zone 8b?

S. cardinalis (*S. fulgens* form): (Re) - This species is now considered a form of *S. fulgens*. It has narrower, thinner leaves, a noticeable involucre with elongated, orange-tipped, scented bracts, and smaller, fuzzy flowers. It also had a more prostrate, denser habit. I have seen accessions with habits intermediate with the standard form of *S. fulgens*.

S. karwinskii: (Re) - Introduced from the Bay area of northern California (probably by Dennis Breedlove, who collected many of these). An erect relative of the roseleaf sages that can get 8 feet tall with grey, evenly hairy leaves. The 1.5 inch flowers are borne in fairly dense spikes late in the year.

S. holwayi: (Re) - Probably a Dennis Breedlove introduction. It is a spreader with nice green foliage and long spikes of 1.25 inch red tubular flowers. It looks best as a bedding plant in medium shade.

S. vanhouttei (burgundy form): (Burgundy) - I distributed this plant propagated from a gift of Longwood Gardens. They got it in turn from a nursery in South Africa. As far as anyone can tell, it is a selection or a hybrid of *S. splendens*. There are now up to seven different seed-generated color sports of it, including a lavender one. This suggests that it was the product of a selection and/or breeding program. The orange sport is the most common and looks a lot more like the species form of *S. splendens*.

Anyway, this form has persistent brownish-red ca-

lyxes and deep carmine flowers. It forms an open, medium-sized bush. Medium-sized potted specimens come back from dormancy in a cold frame even if all the above ground growth has been removed. After breaking dormancy, growth can be rapid.

Xeric Sages:

Salvia oresbia/darcyi/schaffneri (Re) - A Yucca Do introduction. The identity of this plant is uncertain in my mind. Characterized as a new species, *S. darcyi*, by James Compton, and as *S. oresbia* by Dr. T. P. Ramamoorthy, I have identified it by comparison with the Harvard Herbarium type sheet for *S. schaffneri* quoted in Carl Epling's *A Revision of Salvia subgenus Calosphace* as being that species.

Whatever its true identity, it is a durable Rambler that layers itself and forms dense colonies. It can handle intense sun and blooms most of the summer, but best in cooler weather. Flowers are about 2 inches and shaped like those of *S. patens*. The 2 inches foliage is hairy and heart shaped. It does generate some stolons.

S. roemeriana: (Re) - This Texas/Mexico sage is a compact (in sun) bush with small, scalloped leaves found most often in cedar canyon breaks. These sites are where the drainage in the Edwards Plateau escarpment makes its way to lower elevations by erosions. Here there are a lot of *Juniperus* to take advantage of the water. Leaf litter collects in pockets found in the limestone or caliche boulders. This sage grows like a hanging basket here, making an interesting display. The foliage even has a cedary scent.

This species and its cousins are distinct in that the flowers are polymorphic. The flowers are stunted and cleistogamous (self-pollinating) during the summer. During the cooler parts of the season, flowers are about the same size as typical *S. coccinea* and *S. greggii* blooms. In sun, growth is compact, and the 2 foot bushes can put out spectacular displays. Foliage is somewhat greyish.

S. henryi: (Re) - This plant is a more western cousin of *S. roemeriana*. It is more open in structure, with greener leaves and a more spreading habit. It is at home scrambling amongst rocks. *S. davidsonii* and *S. summa* are similar.

There is obviously a lot of species and forms to choose from, for many types of growing conditions. Most of these are available through various mail sources as either seed or plants. Let's keep an eye out for interesting garden sports while we paint our gardens red!

[*Salviaphile* and Piedmont Chapter member Richard Dufresne lives and gardens in Greensboro, N.C.]

Friends of the JC Raulston Arboretum Fall Lectures

Call 919-515-3132 for information. NCSU,
Raleigh, N.C., Room 159 Kilgore Hall, 7:30 p.m.
Fee for non-members

September 16, 1999: Johnny Randall on "Invasive Exotic Plants—A Real or Perceived Problem?"

October 21, 1999: Dick Bell on "Urban Projects in the Landscape"

November 6, 1999: Brent Heath on "Scenes of South Africa"

November 11, 1999: Jenks Farmer on "Liberate Your Pansies! Winter Annuals with Bold, Beautiful Texture and Color"

N.C. Botanical Garden Fall Programs

Call 919-962-0522 for information.
UNC, Totten Center, Chapel Hill

October 10, 1999 at 3:00 p.m.: Bobby J. Ward, Book signing/reading of *A Contemplation Upon Flowers*. (Free)

November 6, 1999 at 9:30 a.m.: Sue Hinson & Jean Wright on "Color in the Fall & Winter Garden." (Fee charged)

November 13, 1999 at 9:30 a.m.: Sue Hinson & Jean Wright on "Using Evergreens in the Landscape." (Fee charged)

continued from page 1
edge about salvias and furnish valuable information on this vast genus—a genus we gardener's have barely begun to explore.

Reading Sutton's Table of Contents is a quick and precise way of finding out what the book contains. In his Introduction, he notes that he has selected 90 salvias and their cultivars that are garden-worthy in Britain. This selection alone is quite a valuable resource for gardeners in this country. Not only does it illuminate cultural conditions for gardeners whose weather conditions are similar to England but that information can be adapted to other cultural circumstances and sometimes to conditions quite unlike the plant's native habitat. I found his chapter titled "A History of Salvias until 1945" to be of special interest because it calls close attention to how little was written in the past and how what was written was closely connected to the medicinal and culinary virtues of the genus.

In describing individual plants, Sutton has chosen to categorize them by habit. These four chapters, each with an introduction, are titled, "Annuals," "Hardy Herbaceous Perennials," "Half Hardy Herbaceous Perennials," and "Shrubs." And, if the reader does not know the habit of a particular salvia, there is a very good index to quickly facilitate the reader's search for a given plant. The native habitat of the plant is specified along with a brief horticultural description. There is usually a paragraph on cultivation and propagation—but not for all plants. I assume this information is given for only salvias that Sutton has grown.

The book is attractively arranged throughout with good color photographs as well as line drawings. Live specimens of salvias have been pleasingly presented on double pages in color with attention to their foliage and a notation as to reduction in size, if any. I found both flower and foliage color to be realistic and accurate.

This summer, I have referred to *The Gardener's Guide to Growing Salvias* many times and have found it a comprehensive book with information that is of utility and value to both the experienced and inexperienced gardener.

[NARGS member Betsy Clebsch gardens in La Honda, California. She is the author of "A Book of Salvias: Sages for Every Garden" (Timber Press 1997).]

Notice to All Nurserymen and Gardeners

If you are a member of the Piedmont Chapter of NARGS and publish a plant nursery catalog or flier of your plant offerings, you are invited to bring these catalogs or fliers to our meetings to promote your plant sales. Contact M.K. Ramm at (919) 732-7616, who will be happy to work with you to see that your catalogs are made available on a regular basis at our chapter meetings.

In addition, as space allows in each newsletter, we will be pleased to publish (as space permits) notices on nursery or garden open days free of charge. The publication date for the next newsletter is October 1, 1999 for the October-November double issue. Please provide notices by September 15 to Bobby Ward at (919) 781-3291 or email at biblio@pagesZ.net, or fax at (919) 783-0654.

New Book on *Silene* and *Lychnis* From NARGS

James L. ("Jim") Jones of Lexington, Mass., has recently completed a book entitled *Silene and Lychnis in the Garden*, which has been published by the North American Rock Garden Society. Jones is a former president of NARGS.

The soft cover book, edited by the Piedmont Chapter's Barbara Scott, consists of 88 pages with 26 color pictures. The book describes 13 species of *Lychnis* (eight of which are illustrated) and 48 species of *Silene* (38 of which are illustrated). The rock-gardening background and experiences of the author make it especially interesting to NARGS members. The book is the first publication by NARGS to be promoted to the general public.

Silene and Lychnis in the Garden retails for \$9.95 but is available to NARGS (national) members for \$7.00 (including shipping), a 30% discount.

The *lychnis* and *silene* book will be available from the NARGS Book Service by the end of October for NARGS members. Contact Roy Dicks, the NARGS Book Service manager, at 919-781-3291 or nargs@pagesZ.net to order a copy. His address is 930 Wimbeldon Drive, Raleigh, NC 27609.

Non-NARGS members may purchase the book for \$9.95, which includes shipping charges.

Members Gardens and Nurseries Weekend Open Days-Fall 1999

Architectual Trees

September 24 and every weekend thereafter during the fall.

Fridays noon till 6:00 p.m.; Saturdays 10:00 a.m. till 6:00 p.m.; Sundays 10:00 a.m. till 5:00 p.m.

For information, call **John Monroe** at 919-620-0779 for directions.

Bahama, N.C.

Camellia Forest Nursery

October 2-3, 9-10, and 16-17

Saturdays 9:00 a.m. till 5:00 p.m.; Sundays 1:00 p.m. till 5:00 p.m.

For information, call **Kai Mei Parks** or **David Parks** at 919-968-0504, or 919-960-7690; or email camforest@aol.com, or <http://camforest.com>
9701 Carrie Road, Chapel Hill, N.C.

Chatham Growers Association

October 16, 9:00 a.m. till 1:00 p.m.

For information, call **Roger Boyles** at 919-967-9515
Plants will be sold in the North Carolina Botanical Garden staff parking lot, Chapel Hill, N.C.

Green Hill Farm

September 4 and 11

Saturdays 8:30 a.m. till 5:00 p.m.

For directions and information call **Bob Solberg** at 919-309-0649

Montrose Gardens

September 25 and October 9

10:00 a.m. till 4:00 p.m.

No admission charge; park next door at Cameron Park School,

For information, call **Nancy Goodwin** at 919-732-7787

320 St. Marys Road, Hillsborough, N.C.

Niche Gardens

Open weekends now through October 31

Saturdays 9:00 a.m. till 5:00 p.m.; Sundays noon till 5:00 p.m.

For information, call **Kim Hawks** at 919-967-0078 or www.nichegdn.com

1111 Dawson Road, Chapel Hill, N.C.

Plant Delights Nursery

September 10-12 and September 17-19

Friday and Saturdays 8:00 a.m. till 5:00 p.m.;

Sundays 1:00 p.m. till 5:00 p.m.

For information call **Tony Avent** at 919-772-4794, or email office@plantdel.com
9241 Sauls Road, Raleigh, N.C.

Singing Springs Nursery

September 12 and 19; October 3 and 10

Sundays 1:00 p.m. till 5:00 p.m.

For information call **Pam Baggett** at 919-732-6336; or email nightair@mindspring.com
8802 Wilkerson Road, Cedar Grove, N.C.

Join NARGS

Join the **North American Rock Garden Society**. Benefits include a subscription to the *Rock Garden Quarterly*, seed exchange, garden book purchases at a discount, study weekends, and annual meetings, as well as other benefits. (Membership in the Piedmont Chapter is separate from NARGS, the national organization.) Membership is \$25/year.

Send payment to Jacques Mommens, Exec. Secretary of NARGS, P.O. Box 67, Millwood, NY 10546.



Plant Profile...

A Tower of Flowers: Climbing Aster

by Rob Gardner

Just when you are at the end of your gardening rope—when the weather is unbearably hot and muggy, the usual dry spell goes unrelieved for weeks on end and most of the plants in your perennial garden look like they need to be put out of their misery—along comes a colorful wave of asters to revitalize your faith and enthusiasm in gardening.

Indeed, asters turn summer's dry, tired, and apparent end into the exciting beginning of a whole new growing season for our region. Asters are the soul of the fall perennial garden just as iris and day lilies are the centerpieces of the perennial garden in their season. Asters evoke a special character as well in late blooming gardens.

One of my favorites is the climbing aster, *Aster carolinianus*. It is one of the little known but fabulous native plants of which our region has a wealth. It can clamber into shrubs or trees to a height of 15 to 20 feet, although 6 to 10 feet is more typical in the home garden. It has no special climbing adaptations like tendrils, but rather climbs by producing long sprawling stems that weave themselves upward through accommodating "hosts." Hundreds of pretty, magenta-rose flowers begin blooming in late October and are always in bloom for Thanksgiving. We-Du Nursery in Marion, N.C., reports that their climbing aster is often still blooming on Christmas Day.

Climbing asters produce "woody" stems from which the new growth emerges each spring. It doesn't have to start from the ground every spring like most other perennials. It is planted in a favorable spot, it can get bigger, thicker, and higher each succeeding season. In the wild this plant can form impressive towers of flowers up to 20 feet tall, growing in trees along streams and wet areas, where it is most often found. We are lucky that it is equally happy in the garden setting. In bud, climbing asters look like they are covered in hundreds of tiny pinky pine cones because of the prominent, pink-tinged bracts that surround each flower bud. In flower, it is a gardener's dream—covered in blooms from head to toe.

Climbing asters are very pretty when grown among beauty berry shrubs (*Callicarpa americana*). The magenta-rose flowers of the aster in combination with the clusters of lilac-purple berries on the

leafless stems of beauty berry make a surprising and harmonious late season combination.

By far, my favorite ways to exhibit the wonderful qualities of this late-blooming native aster is to train it up a cedar post or "snag." This makes a very dramatic vertical accent especially if you have room for two or three such climbing aster pillars. Climbing aster pillars can extend the interest of your perennial bed well into the late fall and early winter.

There are a number of nurseries selling *Aster carolinianus*: Fairweather (609-451-6261); Native Gardens (423-856-0220); Nature's Nook (888-485-5161); Pine Ridge Gardens (501-293-4359); Singing Springs Nursery (919-732-8300); We-Du Nurseries (828-738-8300) and Wild Earth (732-308-9777).

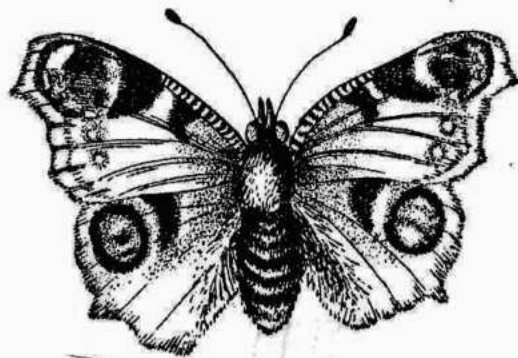
[Piedmont Chapter of NARGS member Rob Gardner is Curator of Native Plants at the North Botanical Garden in Chapel Hill, N.C.]

Fall Seedling Sale at September 18, 1999 Meeting of Piedmont Chapter

Piedmont Chapter members are invited to bring seedlings and other small plants to our chapter's annual Fall Seedling Sale at our September 18 meeting at the Totten Center at the N. C. Botanical Garden. Please clearly label all plants and use only clean pots.

This annual seedling sale is the primary money maker for our chapter, and the sale helps fund out-of-state speakers, the publication of *The Trillium* newsletter, and other chapter expenses. Please be generous with your plant donations and your purchases.

For further information on the plant sale, contact Donna Maroni at (919) 929-8863, Tom Sutton at (919) 550-0226, or Laddie Munger at (919) 481-1127.



**Piedmont Chapter of NARGS
Board Members 1998-1999**

Chair: Marian Stephenson, 305 Clayton Road, Chapel Hill, NC 27514; telephone (919) 942-5820; email RLLindahl@aol.com

Past Chair: Barbara Scott, 1321 Chaney Road, Raleigh, NC 27606; telephone (919) 859-6703. e-mail barbara_scott@ncsu.edu

Vice-Chairman/Programs: Mike Chelednik, P.O. Box 20361, Greenville, NC 27858-0361; telephone (252) 752-9752; email b5h4j4gv@coastalnet.com

Treasurer: Bob Wilder, 1213 Dixie Trail, Raleigh, NC 27607; telephone (919) 781-2255. e-mail wilder@pagesZ.net

Board Member-at-Large: Rob Gardner, 5423 Bobcat Road, Chapel Hill, NC 27516; (919) 929-7252; e-mail gardner3@email.unc.edu

Board Member-at-Large: Donna Maroni, P.O. Box 1107, Carrboro, NC 27510; telephone (919) 929-8863; email dmaroni@email.unc.edu

Board Member-at-Large: M.K. Ramm, 234 Crawford Road, Hillsborough, NC 27278; telephone (919) 732-7616; email mkr@cs.duke.edu

The Trillium Newsletter Editor: Bobby J. Ward, 930 Wimbleton Drive, Raleigh, NC 27609-4356; telephone (919) 781-3291; fax (919) 783-0654; e-mail biblio@pagesZ.net

**Piedmont Chapter of NARGS
Positions of Responsibility**

Refreshments & Hospitality: Gwen and Maurice Farrier, 4205 Arbutus Dr., Raleigh, NC 27612; (919) 787-1933.

Fall Seedling Sale: Donna Maroni, telephone (919) 929-8863; Tom Sutton, telephone (919) 550-0226; and Laddie Munger, telephone (919) 481-1127.

**1999-2000 Speakers
for NARGS Piedmont
Chapter Programs**

September 18, 1999

Richard Dufresne

Greensboro, North Carolina

"The Genus Salvia"

October 16, 1999

Ted Kipping

San Francisco, California

"Cloud Forests of Oaxaca and Chiapas, Mexico"

November 20, 1999

Bob McCartney

Aiken, South Carolina

"Unknown Southern Natives for
the Rock Garden"

January 15, 2000

Nancy Goodwin

Hillsborough, North Carolina

"The Garden in Winter"

February 19, 2000

Bobby Ward

Raleigh, North Carolina

"Four Continents and a Camera:
A Year in Pursuit of Plants"

March 18, 2000

Pam Harper

Seaford, Virginia

"My Garden Throughout the Seasons"

April 15, 2000

Panayoti Kelaidis

Denver, Colorado

"Hot Rocks: Rock Gardening for the Southeast"

All Piedmont Chapter NARGS Programs are held
at 10:00 a.m. on a Saturday in the Totten Center,
N.C. Botanical Garden, Chapel Hill, N.C.

Speakers arranged by Mike Chelednik, Programs
Chair for Piedmont Chapter of NARGS



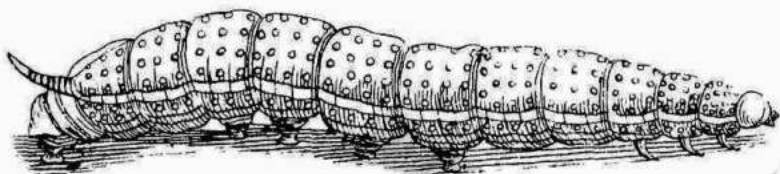
Membership Renewal Notice--Last Chance to Renew

Membership renewal cards were mailed July 6th to those whose membership expired in July 1999.

Check your mailing label for your membership expiration date. For example, 9907 means that your membership expired July 1999 (99-year 1999; 07-seventh month July). **This issue of *The Trillium* is the last issue you will receive unless you renew your membership now.**

However, there is a new option this year. You can renew for one year, three years, or five years at either \$10/yr (single membership) or \$15/yr (household membership). Even though your membership may not be up for renewal you may go ahead and make advanced payment for multiple future years now, using the form below. Complete the form and mail to treasurer at the address on the form.

If you are not a member of the national North American Rock Garden Society, your membership is encouraged. Membership is \$25/yr. I will be happy to forward your membership to our national NARGS Treasurer. Your membership in the local Piedmont Chapter of NARGS is separate from the national organization.



Bobby G. Wilder,
Treasurer, Piedmont Chapter NARGS

Clip Here and Return to Our Chapter Treasurer

Piedmont Chapter, NARGS Membership Form

Single Membership-\$10/yr or Household Membership-\$15/yr PLEASE CIRCLE ONE

NEW OPTION: 1 YR _____ 3 YRS _____ 5 YRS _____

Household Memberships will receive one copy of *The Trillium* newsletter.

MAIL TO: BOBBY G. WILDER Checks payable to: Piedmont Chapter, NARGS
1213 DIXIE TRAIL
RALEIGH NC 27607-6841 PHONE: 919-781-2255

PLEASE PRINT

NAME #1 (Last, First) _____

NAME #2 (Last, First) _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE & ZIP CODE _____

PHONE _____ E-MAIL _____

ARE YOU A MEMBER OF NORTH AMERICAN ROCK GARDEN SOCIETY? YES NO CIRCLE ONE

NATIONAL MEMBERSHIP: \$25/YEAR. I WILL BE HAPPY TO FORWARD TO NATIONAL SECRETARY.

The Back Page...

Chair's Comments

by Marian Stephenson

All around the Triangle, schools are starting and vacationers are returning home sporting tans and peeling skin or loaded with photographs from the travel jaunts they have enjoyed. The weather will cool down and life will be good again. It is almost that time again. Hurrah! The Piedmont Chapter is gearing up for a good season with this year's varied and balanced program of great speakers, arranged by Mike Chelednik.

Even as today's temperature is predicted to reach 95 degrees. I am thinking ahead, anticipating the cooler days of fall, that hopefully will be here soon. Particularly, I am looking forward to the September Seedling Sale at our first meeting of the season. Since my ferns, asarums and cucurmas from last year's sale have given me so much pleasure and grown so well this year, I have already started a mental wish list for the sale. Since the summer has been so hot and dry, you may have spaces in your garden to fill, so remember to shop here first!

We do expect this year's plant offerings to vary somewhat from last year's, since I understand that some little ferns intended for the sale have been lost. I would like to encourage you, actually urge each of you to pot up something you have that can be shared. It would be nice to offer a wide variety of seedlings to choose from. Taking a armful of seedlings home from the first meeting in the fall has become one of my favorite activities. Let Donna Maroni know at 929-8863, what you can contribute and how many, so she may have the needed space reserved for them. I appreciate the work that Donna, Tom Sutton, and Laddie Munger—and others—have done to make this a successful seedling sale.

From time to time, other societies and garden clubs contact us asking for program speakers for their group. If you are developing an illustrated talk or have one already to go, please let me know if you are interested in being contacted. Some groups state they pay an honorarium, others don't mention it. The Board will discuss this in September and may suggest guidelines.

Your comments will be welcomed.

Bobby J. Ward, Editor
The Trillium Newsletter
Piedmont Chapter of NARGS
930 Wimbledon Drive
Raleigh, North Carolina 27609-4356
USA

First Class Mail

Last Chance to Renew Your Membership
before the September meeting. This is the last
newsletter you will receive if your membership
expired in July 1999. See details inside on
page 11.



Mailed September 2, 1999