



The Trillium

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the Piedmont Chapter of the
North American Rock Garden Society

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Mar.-Apr. 2001

Our March Speaker . . .

A Sampler of Andean Flora

The speaker for our March 17 NARGS meeting is Helen Beaufort-Murphy of Lexington, N.C. Helen is a plant scientist who received her M.S. and Ph.D. degrees in botany and plant physiology from N.C. State University. After graduate work, she spent 10 years in South America, based in Peru, as an agricultural scientist studying animal nutrition and pasture development. While in Peru, she travelled throughout the Andes and developed an interest and keen knowledge of Andean flora, as well as the archaeology, culture, and textiles of the native people.

Dr. Beaufort-Murphy was born in the United Kingdom and has done research at Kew Gardens, the University of Edinburgh, and in the U.S. at the Smithsonian. She is currently preparing a book on the botany and anthropology of Peru. Dr. Beaufort-Murphy has also written a book on the history of Southwest England.

Northwest Harmony . . .

The Oregon Garden of the O'Byrnes

by Louise Parsons

The cool Mediterranean climate of the Northwest offers sufficient dormant season to grow alpine, hardy plants, shrubs, and bulbs, and yet the winters are kind enough to extend the range of possibilities. Aurora, goddess of the winds, is indeed a temptress in this climate beckoning us to try many tender plants. When you come to Oregon, you will find many varied gardens and natural spots to visit. In addition to being a lure, mild winters are also a demand on the gardener, because the weeds also grow in the winter, and one never quite puts the entire garden to bed.

The setting for the lavish garden of Marietta and Ernie O'Byrne is a gently rolling series of stream features both carved and deposited by the Willamette River and its tributaries as they wandered in their course. At the edge of the valley the foothills of the coast ranges, where marine sandstones can be found,

See O'Byrne. Continued on page 2

Our March meeting of NARGS
Saturday, March 17, 2001
10:00 a.m., Totten Center
N.C. Botanical Garden, Chapel Hill, N.C.

"Alpines of the Andes"
Dr. Helen Beaufort-Murphy
Lexington, N.C.

Last names "R" through "Z," bring goodies.

Our April meeting of NARGS
Saturday, April 21, 2001
10:00 a.m., Totten Center
N.C. Botanical Garden, Chapel Hill, N.C.

"A Garden Through the Season"
Ernie O'Byrne
Eugene, Oregon

Last names "A" through "H," bring goodies.

contribute to the richness and sandy texture of local soils. Ernie and Marietta are enthusiastic composters, faithfully adding a layer every year to their borders and beds. All spent plant material is recycled into compost in huge bins. They have added premier soil ingredients in varying proportions to make a fine setting ever better. Among the goodies are: transplanting soil from Rexius (a local forest products company); pumice purchased or collected in the Cascades; 1/4"-1/10" gravel (which must be washed!) from one of the rock crushing companies; cinders; and garden compost purchased in addition to the bountiful home-made supply.

As you travel from Eugene to the garden, you pass gradually out of the Willamette Valley floor into a region of foothills and gently rolling, mature outwash terraces. South of Fern Ridge Reservoir, you turn onto Central Road and pass by typical small farms with their charming agricultural variety. You have been told to look for a bamboo hedge and find that from the road, the residence and garden look much like the small farms and rural homes of their neighbors. But hidden from the road is another world. As you pass through a beautifully crafted ironwork gate with stylized clematis and a fanciful dragonfly fashioned from a bolt, you are likely to at least silently gasp with pure surprise. Here, in contrast to the open rolling fields and scrub oak, is laid before you a lush array of unexpectedly grand proportion. Yet despite the surprise, you simultaneously and instantly have the feeling that it all somehow belongs here.

Most certainly the birds and small animals think so. As crammed with exotica as it is, this is a garden for and about nature. Through the summer hummingbirds have a large selection of salvias and other favorites from colorful perennial beds. Among the kniphofias on the menu is the Ugandan *Kniphofia thomsonii* var. *snowdenii* for some exotic nectar dining indeed!

The visitor's greeting committee may consist of one of the quietly friendly greyhounds who are taking a break from their endless deer-patrol marathons when Ernie and Marietta are busy in the spacious propagation areas of their garden and nursery, which specializes in choice perennials and fine woodland plants. A ginger cat gives a friendly rub and goes back to a favorite sleeping spot to settle in. In front of the residence an immaculate lawn under

a large maple is swept with a huge border of woodlanders and shade plants. The bamboo frontage serves as a windbreak and protects woodland gems from the hottest afternoon sun. A long drainage way rimmed with poplars is home to a stunning display of primulas and other spring moisture-loving plants. Beyond the drainageway is another light woodland area with deep rich soil that is home to meconopsis, arisaemas, ferns, and countless other treasures. A large open area beyond the house is the sunny setting for rock gardens and troughs. North of the house a shady area features many *Helleborus orientalis* hybrids [*Helleborus x hybridus*] in fabulously rich colors. Conifers and mats create a pleasing interplay of form, texture and ever-changing color in open areas. A sense of harmony is created, and your eyes dance from one beautiful spot of green to the next in the intricacies of ferns, shrubs, ground covers, and woodlanders.

This expansive garden has an incredibly creative layout. You are carried from one area to another without being conscious that you are being led. To best appreciate the totality of this or any garden of grander scale, a complete walkabout is advised first. Easier said than done, as so many plants enchant and beg you to stop and take a close look. You find a path that takes you through the center of a generously wide border and have all intentions of following it through a portal of weeping Atlas Cedar to realms beyond, but are stopped short by a magnificent *Arisaema taiwanensis* with its stem of brown and green in intricately bargello or "flame-stitch" patterns. Vistas and visual corridors are so subtle that you never feel hedged or hemmed-in: no garden-rooms in this garden, but rather, garden spaces. The floor-plan style is open.

There is a heightened sense of chiaroscuro as you stand in a shaded area and look through a wide window bounded loosely by trees and shrubs at the sunny scree garden beyond. This is the essence of the relaxed and natural, yet devotedly cultivated style of the Northwest garden. Nature is tamed, shaped, and tended to artistic ends, but she is always respected. It is tempting to use the word "rich tapestry" to describe this garden, but a tapestry does not begin to convey the sense of depth and texture. Nor does it express the harmony and rhythm found here. Always there is animation—in the subtle sometimes sparkling dance of the sunlight filtered through lacy trees and shrubs—in the glow of pale or bright foliage against deeper forest greens.

It is the plants themselves that are the best judge of the worth of a garden. When those that are recalcitrant in nature go beyond mere survival to thriving, setting seed, or otherwise spreading, this is the best tribute of all. *Glaucidium palmatum* and *Corydalis flexuosa* grow as though they truly belong among the gentle sea of treasures. The naturally cool soil in the Northwest favors many woodland plants such as primula, meconopsis, and corydalis. With the excellent soil that Ernie and Marietta have built, Himalayan plants do especially well, because all their needs are met. Even in the height of summer the nights are cool enough to keep soil temperatures down. In the lightly shaded beds, *Meconopsis horridula*, *M. betonicifolia* and the especially profuse bloomer, *M. x sheldonii* all show clear glowing shades of blue. *Meconopsis grandis* 'Amethyst Form' adds an unusual gemstone color to the palette. Marietta and Ernie enthusiastically raise the great majority of their thousands of plants from seed. This year for the first time *M. punicea* has germinated and produced six good sized plants. Another challenging plant to grow, *Primula bhutanica* has produced about 40 plants. With careful heed to microenvironment, these made it through the summer heat and reward the O'Byrnes with their soft blue bloom and gently blended white eyes. This charmingly modest primula lacks stomata for cooling and is particularly intolerant of any blasts of heat or sun. This primula is also a rare find because the seeds are especially ephemeral. Many natives of Japan such as *Helionopsis orientalis* with its puffy globes of tiny starry pink "lilies" do well in the cool partially shaded woodland.

In an open area where it can be enjoyed from the patio, a large rock and scree garden has been constructed with boulders and generous slabs of meta-andesite from nearby Conser Quarry. As they learned the ways of the winter rain that accelerates the decomposition of organic material, the O'Byrnes found most plants suited to a richer soil than conventional alpine mixes. Enriching the soil somewhat also helped the plants of high places to survive the summer drought better. On a lovely day in July I enjoyed a lunch of tasty salad, made from select greens from Ernie and Marietta's beautiful vegetable garden, on the deck with a splendid view of the rock gardens. Hummingbirds buzz among the wall of *Lonicera heckrottii* that borders a pool. *Silene hookerii* and *S. x ingramii* show off their clear pink bloom nearby. Campanulas and *Origanum* 'Kent

Beauty' are found among the conifers and countless saxifrages, and carpets of raoulia and mosses have spread to generous proportions. Troughs hold countless gems such as a *Lewisia* hybrid from Eugene grower Jon Splane that blooms over a long time with a shower of soft, peachy yellow. *Lewisia longipetala* x *cotyledon* has produced profuse blooms of soft apricot and yellow shades, while *L. rupicola* x *leana* sports a bright cerise. *Anemone obtusiloba* is another trough resident with a long bloom. *Ranunculus parnassifolius* x *amplexicaulis* is a tirelessly blooming gem whose seed came from Henry and Margaret Taylor. Large cushions of *porophyllum saxifragas* are to be found both in troughs and in the open garden. *Gentiana verna* makes a very floriferous pool of the bluest blue year after year.

The crevice garden consists of slabs of platy andesite placed on end in a generally sandwich form to provide planting spaces. In addition to the usual rock chockstones added to the soil, the mix is rich with screened pumice. Some choice crevice ferns such as *Cheilanthes tomentosa*, an especially silvery form, have spread along the crevices. An Oregon native fern, *Cheilanthes siliquosa*, prides itself on its spot atop a generous crevice. An intricate ball of *Selaginella sanguinolenta* var. *compressa* is prosperous enough to have produced some small offspring. On the shady sides of the slightly protruding, vertical rock plates, rich rosettes of ramondas are nestled along the seams. At the top of a crevice, a delicate Northwest alpine kittentail, *Synthyris pinnatifida* var. *lanuginosa*, displays lovely, pale, ferny foliage.

Under the shade of a trim elm tree you will find a new damp-peat garden featuring Ericaceae and other acid-loving plants. Rocks are used discretely in this elevated bed. In the relentless Northwest winter rain, it is necessary to provide for drainage even in a garden designed to please plants of the aerated bogs and seeps. For this reason, the bed contains a generous amount of screened pumice and rich peat. Deadfall branches and small logs add structure to the bed. The weathered limbs are intertwined slightly and create a natural appearance. Early color is provided by rhododendrons such as *R. yunnanense* and a cultivar 'Lavendula', and a growing collection of the choicest primulas. In brighter light at the edge, *Salix yezoalpina* rambles naturally with upright catkins and furry pleats of newly emerging leaves in the spring.

There is ample opportunity to enjoy some especially diminutive gems along the front expanse of

this garden. *Carex conica marginata* creates a tiny foliar fountain of white, crisply pencilled edges. Gently rotating, weepy mounds of *Cassiope lycopodioides* show tiny glimpses of their bright, beet-red stems. *Kalmiopsis fragrans* 'LePiniec Form' has settled into its new home, along with a choice new *Helichrysum* from the Sani Pass, South Africa, that shows off felted silvery foliage at the front of the bed in good light. In the early autumn, *Erica tetralix* 'Alba Mollis' displays pale candles of new growth and terminal clusters of plump but tiny, white eggs among its rich, deep green foliage. *Codonopsis aurantiaca* from a recent NARGS seed exchange is settling in, along with *Corydalis bracteata*, a native of Siberia and the Altai.

Ernie and Marietta have a varied collection of *Corydalis*, which have been situated around the gardens according to their special needs. *Corydalis solida* glows rosy pink in its rocky spot, and *C. integra* 'Papanicolaï' has a special home in a trough. Both of these *Corydalis* species have an excellent flower presentation and appear often on the show bench. *Corydalis* 'Munich Sunrise' could surely find a place there and thrives here in its trough home. An Oregon gem growing in a rocky but sheltered spot is *Trillium rivale*, with its diminutive but generous cluster of cupped, white trefoils with prominent yellow anthers among shiny, petioled leaves.

"Running out of room for larger plants and still being immoderate in our collecting desires" is what got Marietta and Ernie interested in rock gardening. More than a decade ago they joined the NARGS. They played a key role in starting and sustaining the Emerald Chapter. Ernie recalls that one of the first articles that he read in the *Bulletin* of the ARGS, by Phil Pearson and Steve Doonan, was about a trip to Ice Lake. It captivated and held his interest, even though the plants mentioned were all unfamiliar.

Like all devoted gardeners, Ernie and Marietta have goals, plans and projects underway. One area that they have had less success with is the plants of the dryland West. Because all of their established garden is watered during the summer drought, they are planning a separate area for dryland plants in an out-of-the-way spot at the end of a hoop house. Here they will have unwatered sand beds and raised bulb beds.

Winter wet is already moderated in places by the use of plexiglass covers, but there is a limit to that. Some plants such as *Convolvulus boissieri* have been tried and found to "just melt away," even under

cover, in the humid and cold winter. None of this stops the rock garden from continually bursting with color though. When their drainage needs are met, many Mediterranean and Turkish plants such as *Asperula sintenisii* smother themselves in flowers among the rocks. With diminutive stature and furry, sage green foliage, this is a rewarding rock garden plant.

What can the future still hold for a garden so close to the pinnacle? Recently the O'Byrnes have begun to experiment with Turface®, a baked clay product that may be used as a soil-conditioner, to both increase the air ratio in the soil mix and retain a desirable moisture level at the same time. There are still new plants to be desired. The propagation area is bursting with immaculate pots of seedlings. Newly sown seeds, carefully top-dressed with grit hold the promise of more treasures yet to come.

[NARGS member Louise Parsons gardens in Corvallis, Oregon. The article originally appeared in a slightly different form in the NARGS Rock Garden Quarterly (Winter 1998) Used by permission of the author.]



647.—PRIMULA AURICULA.
Red, yellow, purple, shaded . . .

A Knock-Your-Socks-Off Alpine Book?

by Panayoti Kelaidis

What is the best alpine, rock gardening book? Practically every book written on the subject of rock gardening is written by and for plant nerds. No offence, dear fellow subscribers (I myself certainly fit the description to a "t"), but let's cut to the chase: we're the nerdiest of plant nerds. I believe this is both the strength and weakness of rock gardening: there are just enough of us (P.N.'s for short) to justify a number of fine small magazines, a constant flow of modest books, [and] a chummy community. Nevertheless, I have always regretted that the enormous pleasures available to rock gardeners: the aesthetic thrill of foliage and rock and the astonishing beauty of our favorite flowers, not to mention the way that rock gardening connects one to the entire world, all this is shared by a tiny fraction of the world's population. I believe it may not just be stingy to keep this treasure of an art sequestered, as it were, among a mere couple tens of thousands of people, it may be short sighted. If, as Henry David Thoreau once said, in wilderness is the salvation of the world, I can think of no finer portal to wilderness than rock gardening. Wilderness transportable, as it were.

I blame Robinson for this fix we're in. Him and Henri Correvon: these two undisputed fountainheads of rock gardening were so plant focused in their books, so scientific in their methodology and thinking that rock gardening that they imprinted the craft with more botany than art. Had Gertrude Jekyll published a separate book on rock gardening (instead of *Wall and Water Gardening*) we might have seen the rock garden, or at least some part of our art develop along artistic lines like the perennial border. Which isn't to say rock gardens aren't artistic: even the gardens of the nerdiest among us can look pretty stunning in May. And there are the occasional rock gardeners like the late Duncan Lowe, Linc Foster, and Harland Hand who were truly artists in their gardens, not to mention the likes of Nina Lambert, Bodizar Berginc, the Redfields, and who knows how many Czechs whose rock gardens are so artful in their colors that it takes a while to realize they are even better as collections of plants.

All this is preamble to saying that no, there has yet to be a sumptuous coffee table book on rock gardens as garden art. I don't know a single rock garden designed primarily for artistic effect, although Sir John Thouron's and Frank Cabot's Stonecrop would seem to fit the bill, until you look closely and see how large a collection of

plants they contain, and how the plantings are designed with the plant nerd in mind. I know, I know, Edinburgh, Gothenburg, Nymphenburg, and the Thomas Everett Garden at NYBG all have rock gardens of enormous beauty but I maintain this is less a result of conscious planning as it is the result of the fact that most traditional rock plants have flowers more or less in pastel shades that combine well, and if you grow enough of them the result—at least in April and May—can be stunning. It is very sad that Harland Hand never completed a book on his theory of garden design—I believe this would have gone a long way to providing us with a manual on the art of rocks and plants—does anyone know how close to completion his book was at the time of his death?

I believe that potentially there is a tremendous market among amateur and professional gardeners for sound information on how to design and build artistic rock gardens. Information that doesn't end up being yet another compendium of Latin names, a book that shows how to optimize color and texture through the calendar year. Moreover, I think rock gardens designed along artistic lines (rather than as museum pieces, so to speak, to house plant collections) would surpass most perennial borders in garden impact and utility due to their much lovelier winter appearance and potentially longer season of showy bloom. I believe, furthermore, that a renewed inquiry and respect for the aesthetics of rock gardening, a willingness to grant space on Alpine-L and especially among the Society journals to the art of combining rock plants in gardens would consequently open the door to a much wider audience for our art.

Why bother expand the audience? I believe rock gardening is a valuable pass time and occupation for anyone. But I believe that it is much more than this: rock gardening is the best sort of education one can have in ecology and floristics. Who among us doesn't cherish the wild more because of it? It casts a spotlight on nature, and raises the value of pristine wild places in the face of ignorant development and human overpopulation. The more people who grow wild plants the more that the wild models of our gardens matter as well. The more apt we are to have the world survive to be as beautiful as our gardens.

[Panayoti Kelaidis is Curator of the Plant Collections, including the Rock Alpine Garden at the Denver Botanic Gardens in Denver, Colorado. This article was originally posted on Alpine-L, the Internet Electronic Rock Garden Society at ALPINE-L@NIC.SURFNET.NL, on January 27, 2001. Reproduced by permission of the author.]

Remembering the Color of the Month

by Geoffrey B. Charlesworth

Months don't really have a color but the mental image of a "typical" day may bring back a predominant color or a characteristic color. January, of course, is white. But is there a color "becoming white" (*albicans*)? That is what we see in a snow storm when even the wind is quiet and all the familiar sounds of birds, people, and cars are dimmed down to the last degree before the sound is on mute. You cannot capture the color on film. The eye has to see first snowflakes melting on eyelashes, tickling sensitive skin, then the flakes that surround you in a maelstrom of busy ill-defined directions. Beyond this personal storm is the ghostly gray (*albidus*) of indeterminate distances stirring up an eerie psychology of excitement and fear. Still further and the surfaces are whitening into *niveus* as the insubstantial, powdery residue thickens. You must focus rapidly near and far to grasp the color and retain your balance. But the color is almost tangible.

When the snow stops, the white (*virgineus* or *niveus*) becomes a confusing disguise and a piquant pleasure. Paths have disappeared, geography has changed. Eyes are assaulted with a light too fierce to bear. From a window indoors, the white is pure, perfect, and universal. When the door is opened it is clear that beauty must be destroyed. Where footsteps break the surface there is a gray gash (*cinereus*). Even a mouse desecrates the perfection and before long snowplows will transform the mysteries of an unfamiliar landscape into the comfortable banality of civilization. Now the white (*alba*) recedes to distant objects—trees and hills which will hold their burden until wind and sun work another transformation. Then the deep green of pines and hemlocks emerges but only emphasizes the shining white (*candidus*).

February is blue. Not the deep blue of *Gentiana acaulis* (*cyaneus*) or the heavenly blue of *Gentiana verna* (*caeruleus*) but the subtle reflection of blue sky on ice and snow (*caesius*). The sun is now more than a month old, and though it fails to warm us or melt the snow completely, it fills the air with expectation. Our eyes see the ground frozen as though for eternity and it is the light itself that sends the message. Even on a blue day the wind disturbs snow on the barn roof and the blue sky is seen through a whirl of powder. Melting and freezing makes walking treacherous or at best an adventure. Strong winds dry the snow and plow it into ruts across the snow-covered grass. The blue becomes greyish (*cinerascens*).

March, on the other hand, is brown. The grass, which went into the winter still growing as the first snowflakes fell, is now fully dormant. If you are only concerned with superficial appearances or resentful of the slow progress of the seasons, you could call it ugly. But once your imagination, soaring beyond the chestnut brown mud (*castaneus*) and the browned grasses underfoot (*fuscus* to *ochraceus*), reflects on the hidden life in each square inch of exposed earth, a partial thaw becomes a magnificent promise—even a threat—that everything that was, will be again. Among the dead leaves new shoots are visible. The earliest alpine are either in bud or opening the first few flowers. They have no impact on the overall scene and it needs a close inspection to grasp their significance; the inevitability of growth. The evergreen mats and buns are showing a new brighter green and the dull winter brown of *Silene acaulis* (*badius*) is speckled with this new color. The trees are still brown but with a wet lively range of tertiary colors. The willows especially are urgently on the move and the purplish-browns of hellebores, which might be somber in July, are almost revolutionary in March.

Gradually March's points of color expand to April's yellow. Yellow (from *luteus* to *citrinus*) is the color of drabas, alyssums, *Vitaliana*, crocuses, daffodils and dandelions. It dominates the purples and blues of the other *Crocus*, the first irises and scillas, and the prim heathers. It exploits the whites of *Arabis*, *Schivereckia*, and *Iberis* to set itself off. Any attempt to subdue the color of joy is thwarted by ubiquitous dandelion beacons adorning all the grass in the rest of the world. And by yellow garden. June is magenta. That is if you want to subsume all the bluish pinks and pinkish blues along with the not quite violets and reds into this catch-all color. June is many other colors of course but there are some components at least which always remind us of magenta (*purpureus*). *Dianthus*, peonies and penstemons. Together with *Armeria*, thymes, lewisias, *Asperula*, *Delosperma*, *Incarvillea*, *Silene* and a host of other plants the mix of red and blue (*porphyreus*, *purpurascens*, *atropurpureus*, *roseus*, *sanguineus*) that predominates drowns out the competitors. The blues and near blues of the campanulas, ramondas and the almost invisible colors of the eriogonums. There are whites, too, to cool down the more vibrant magentas: *minuartias* and *arenarias* in mats and mounds; *asphodels*, *anthericums* and *paradisias* in spikes.

But by June every garden has its own color and every gardener their own mental color image. Some gardens are almost into the rich greens of conifers, other rock gardens are eclipsed by flowering shrubs and

perennial borders. It isn't until September that yet another color asserts itself. Or rather two colors. The blues of late summer gentians and the lilacs of colchicums (speciosus describes the power but not the shade of the color). The golden October drowns out the attempts of all flowers to attract. Only the bees, now a little sated but still on the lookout for the remnants of the gardens bounty, pay attention. Finally the leaves are down and late October, early November are deep purple. In the woodland, *Vernonia*, in the garden and on the roadside New England asters, and then arrive the oddball primulas, the pulsatillas and finally fall crocuses. All varying shades of purple (violaceus, lilacinus, tyrius, vinaceus).

November has the same light as February but more earthy and greener because the snow hasn't really arrived and the earth is still warm. The moist warm earth and the cooling air give us the mists and fogs of November and that is how we can remember it if we want, but on a warm sunny day, November is also the color of freshly dug earth pied with rich brown leaves. It is nearly time to stop gardening for the winter.

[Geoffrey Charlesworth is the chair of the Berkshire Chapter of NARGS. He gardens with Norman Singer in Sandisfield, Mass. Charlesworth is the author of *The Opinionated Gardener* and *A Gardener Obsessed*, both published by Godine Press (Boston). This article originally appeared in the Newsletter of the Berkshire Chapter of NARGS, January 2001. Reprinted by permission of the author.]

Book Review . . .

A Year in Our Gardens: Letters by Nancy Goodwin and Allen Lacy, The University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, 2001. 207 pages including index. \$27.50 hardcover.

by Bobby J. Ward

"Elizabeth Lawrence's *Gardens in Winter* was the first book to open my eyes and mind to all that we might grow here in Zone 7A at this time of year," writes Nancy Goodwin in a midwinter letter to Allen Lacy about discovering the Lawrence book thirty years ago in a secondhand bookstore and then proceeding to find and grow all the plants mentioned in it. When Goodwin and her husband, Craufurd, later moved to historic Montrose in Hillsborough, N.C., she had the space, the quality of soil, terraced woodlands, and the undaunted enthusiasm to begin installing new gardens. Then, in 1984, she opened Montrose, a mail-order nursery specializing in cyclamen grown from seed. In the mid-1980s, Lacy first learned of Montrose and Nancy and then discovered they had similar interests in gardening and music, mutual friends, and their education at Duke University. Thus began a friendship through telephone calls, visits, and correspondence.

In *A Year in Our Gardens*, a collection of letters between Goodwin and Lacy in 1998, we learn that Lacy, publisher of the newsletter *Homeground*, gardens with his wife Hella on a small, sandy plot of former farmland in southern New Jersey in Linwood. Now a part of suburbia, the Lacy garden (100 x 155 feet) is enclosed from street traffic, and consists of many perennials and annuals, including hedges and shade-loving plants—in association with decks and pergolas and container gardening. Though the two gardens are vastly different, they have two features in common: their owners love gardening and their locations are horticulturally in the same USDA Zone.

This zonal similarity intrigued Nancy, and thus

she proposed to Allen a year's worth of planned correspondence between them as a way of learning how each gardener copes with seasonal changes at their respective locations. In *A Year in Our Gardens* what plants are blooming, dying, or suffering in their gardens is recorded, the seasons they love and hate (Nancy likes winter, Allen does not), their special plant interests (hellebores, cyclamen, and bulbs for Nancy; lilacs, mock oranges, hostas, and greenhouse tropicals for Allen) and gardening styles (Nancy refuses to irrigate and Allen must water frequently on his sandy soil). A typical entry concerns the loss of the great white oak in the circle garden at Montrose, where Nancy eloquently and sadly describes the sawdust on nearby plants: "The tree removers arrived early this morning with an enormous crane, a bucket truck, one large dump truck, and several pickup trucks. . . . They cut large branches and ground up the small limb wood. They carried the chippings to our leaf pile, and we will spread it on paths through the woods garden. . . . I can't think of a more wonderful tree than that oak. I hope it will be a good year for acorns. The shade-loving plants now have full sun, but tonight they also have a covering of sawdust. . . . I hope [a new oak] will be as straight and beautiful as the one we grieve over tonight."

Allen's terror of being caught in a thunderstorm and the counterpoint of delight in getting home to find a night-bloom cereus is wonderfully described. Later recalling that he often hears gardeners say they want an "English garden," he responds that the Lacy First Rule of Gardening is this: You have to garden where you are, not somewhere else.

A Year in Our Gardens is a chronicle of two gardens and two gardeners, different but alike. The gardening narrative is connected throughout by musings on friendship, music, personal health and death, and the major events in life that need boundaries, which Goodwin ponders poignantly when she says, "One boundary that has thus far only a beginning is gardening."

2001 Call for Ephemeral Seeds

A number of us participate in an exchange of seed with short viability. When seed of this type goes through the seed exchange and dry storage it germinates poorly. Appropriate candidates are members of the Ranunculaceae: *Aconitum*, *Adonis*, *Anemone*, *Eranthis*, *Glaucidium*, *Helleborus*, *Hepatica*, *Ranunculus*, *Thalictrum*; and the genera *Asarum*, *Colchicum*, *Corydalis*, *Cyclamen*, *Dicentra*, *Dryas*, *Erythronium*, *Galanthus*, *Hacquetia*, *Hylomecon*, *Jeffersonia*, *Lysichiton*, *Salix*, *Sanguinaria*, *Shortia*, *Stylophorum* and *Trillium*.

This list is not exhaustive, but please restrict offerings to species with known short viability or those which exhibit dramatic differences in germination when sown promptly.

If you have seeds to offer, please fill out the form below and mail it in now - the deadline is March 15. The list will be published in a spring newsletter, letters, or e-mails along with the procedure for obtaining seeds.

Some guidelines for submission:

*A modest offering is advised. If you submitted one or two last year, increase it a little. Try to offer up to half a dozen species, but no more.

*There tend to be many offerings of some taxa. If you have a copy of last year's list, choose items that were not offered or were offered by only one or two donors. If you don't have last year's list, keep the one that comes out this year for reference.

*Diversity is one of our goals. Try to offer what you might have that you haven't seen on the list before. We are always short of *Shortia*.

*Don't offer items from your garden that you haven't seen flower and fruit. Wait another year.

*Don't be afraid of crop failure. If there's no seed, drop a postcard to the requester and save the request for next year.

When the list is published, these are the directions that will be given to requesters:

In order to request seeds:

For each type of seed send the donor one self-addressed stamped envelope with the species name written on it. Multiple forms of the same species are normally suitable for shipping in one envelope, but check the donor's anticipated harvest date to be

sure. If the donor is across an international boundary, obtain International Reply Coupons instead of stamps.

The person requesting the seed is responsible for providing packaging material and insuring that postage sent is sufficient. The US postal service charges a surcharge for a "hand cancel" request. It is normally 11 cents. Please remember that donors are not responsible for adding extra postage or packaging and are not expected to respond to requests where packing material and/or sufficient postage has not been provided by the requesting party. Participating donors' do so only out of the goodness of their hearts they get nothing but your thank you's in return.

Submission form (or facsimile):

Ephemeral Seeds for the 2000 Exchange:

Your Name & Address:

Genus, species and form Anticipated Collection Date

Mail this form to:

Amber Hearn

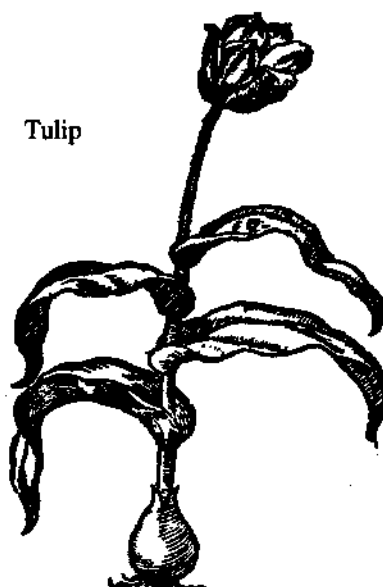
1869 N Hwy 89

Layton, UT 84040

Or email to jadare@altavista.com

Deadline is March 15, 2001.

Tulip



December Garden Notes . . .

Mahonia Hybrids

by Mary Kathryn Ramm

As the fourth coldest December on record for the Triangle area of North Carolina comes to an end, winter flowers are scarcer than usual in my garden east of Hillsborough (on the date of this writing in late December 2000). At this time there are no flowers visible on *Prunus mume*, *Jasminum nudiflorum*, rosemary, or any of my hellebores. All is not bleak, however, as several mahonias are putting on quite a show. The commonly planted *Mahonia bealei* is waiting for warmer weather this year, but is brightening the landscape with those few of its leaves that turn orange before falling off. Remember, even evergreens lose a few leaves every year.

The flower show is coming from the hybrids and even that varies. One of my two favorites (and the one that I don't think is available locally) is *Mahonia* 'Charity'. My eleven year old plant is about seven feet tall and although it has never been pruned has a lovely, bushy shape. Every large branch is topped with a big cluster of 8-10" racemes of light yellow flowers that are nicely fragrant when our temperatures reach our normal high of 50 degrees F at this time of year. *M.* 'Charity' sets a lovely crop of good-sized waxy blue fruits that are almost as eye-catching as the flowers. So far, I have never found a seedling. Of course saying this publicly will cause every seed it has ever produced to germinate this spring. Actually it is likely sterile since it is a hybrid. Incidentally, 'Charity' is planted on the west side of our brick house in full sun and is perfectly happy in that situation. I mention this because it is usually recommended that mahonias be planted in at least in partial shade where they also do quite well.

The second of my favorites is *Mahonia* 'Lionel Fortescue'. This plant has been in flower since Thanksgiving and has held up beautifully through our unpleasant December. This cultivar has the best foliage of my entire collection and its racemes are the longest. The foliage is a rich, shiny green and the compound leaves are somewhat longer than the others that I have. It is a hybrid between *M. lomariifolia* and *M. japonica* that was selected in Southwest England.

Another good mahonia hybrid is *M.* 'Underway'. Neither its leaves nor its racemes are as long as those of *M.* 'Lionel Fortescue' nor does it bloom for me as early as it does for Dan Hinkley who lists it as an autumn bloomer. It is, however, in bloom

now and is certainly a welcome addition to the garden.

Mahonia 'Arthur Menzies', a selection from a flat of *M. lomariifolia* seedlings that all died except "Arthur," is actually a hybrid between *M. lomariifolia* and *M. bealei*. None of its flowers have opened this year yet, but there are many buds at the branch tips.

M. 'Winter Sun' is another beauty, but it is also withholding its flowers this winter. It received an award of merit from the RHS in 1984.

All of these cultivars except 'Charity' are available from nurseries or garden centers in the Triangle area. You will find them in two- or three-gallon pots for \$40 or less. Mahonias are fine plants with year round interest. They deserve to be used more often. They offer blue to green evergreen foliage, fragrant winter flowers, and striking blue fruits. If pruning is necessary it should only involve removal of entire canes—much the same way nandinas should be pruned.

[M. K. Ramm, Piedmont Chapter of NARGS board member, gardens in Hillsborough, N.C. She will handle the Phase I, (seed receipt/intake) for the NARGS Seed Exchange this year.]



2001 Spring Gardens Open House and Announcements

Pine Knot Farms Perennials, Dick and Judith Tyler, 681 Rock Church Road, Clarksville, VA 23927. Telephone (804) 252-199. Email address pineknot@gloryroad.net. Retail sales Fridays and Saturdays March 15 till June 30, 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Hellebore Day March 3.

Plant Delights Nursery, Inc., Tony Avent. April 27-29 and May 4-6, 2001. Also July 6-8 and July 13-15. 9241 Sauls Road, Raleigh, N.C. 8:00 a.m. till 5:00 p.m. on Saturdays and 1:00 till 5:00 on Sundays. Telephone (919) 772-4794.

Montrose Gardens, Nancy Goodwin. 320 St. Marys Road, Hillsborough, N.C., next to Cameron Park School. Gardens open each Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday at 10:00 a.m. and Saturdays at 2:00 p.m. Call ahead for reservations at (919) 732-7787.

Niche Gardens, Kim Hawks. 1111 Dawson Road, Chapel Hill, N.C. Spring 2001 open weekends March 3 - July 1. Guided garden tours Saturday at 10:00 a.m. Open year round: Monday-Friday from 9:00 a.m. till 5:00 p.m. Telephone (919) 967-0078.

Architectural Trees, John Monroe, 6404 Amed Road, Bahama, N.C. 27503. Call for directions at 919 620-0779; fax: 919 620-8580; email: archtrees@aol.com. Website with directions: www.archtrees.com. Spring Reopening: Sat March 10, 9:00 am until 6:00. Then open every Monday and Friday, Saturday and Sunday for about 16 weekends. Hours: Monday and Friday 12 noon to 6:00 pm, Sat: 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. and Sunday 11 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Camellia Forest Nursery, Kai Mei and David Parks, 9701 Carrie Road, Chapel Hill, N. C. Spring Open House will be March 30-April 1, April 6-8 and April 13-15. Hours for Friday and Saturday will be 9:00 a.m. till 5:00 p.m. and Sunday will be 1p.m.-5p.m. The nursery is now also open on regular Saturdays from 10:00 a.m. till 5:00 p.m. Phone number is 919-968-0504; <http://camforest.com>.

Green Hill Farm, Inc., Bob Solberg, PO Box 16306, Chapel Hill, N.C. 27516; Spring open house, Fridays and Saturdays from April 20-21 till June 1-2. Call for time and directions. Phone: 919-309-0649; www.HostaHosta.com.

The Unique Plant, Inc. Operated by Joann Currier, 4207 Oak Hill Road, Chapel Hill, N.C., off Sunrise Road, north of Chapel Hill. Open House each Friday and Saturday from 10:00 a.m. till 5:00 p.m. and Sundays 1:00 till 5:00 p.m. Beginning March 30 through June 3. Telephone (919) 402-0017; or email Joann at uniqplant@aol.com.

2001 . . . A Hosta Odd-yssey

American Hosta Society Convention
Sheraton Imperial Hotel (Page Road Exit)
Raleigh-Durham, N.C.
June 12-16, 2001

Speakers include Dan Hinkley and Barry Yinger
Day tours to nurseries and gardens
Contact: Karen and Dave Duch
1422 Lake Pine Drive
Cary, N.C. 27511
Telephone (919) 467-0653



Hellebore

**Remaining 2000-2001 Speakers
for NARGS Piedmont
Chapter Programs and Activities**

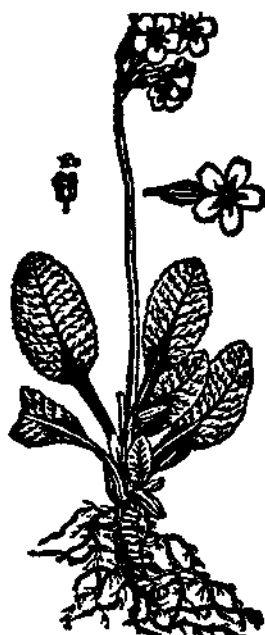
March 17, 2001
Dr. Helen Beaufort-Murphy
Lexington, North Carolina
"Alpines of the Andes"

April 21, 2001
Ernie O'Byrne
Eugene, Oregon
"A Garden Through the Seasons"
Note Program and Speaker Change

May 12, 2001
Noon
Annual Spring Picnic, Potluck, and Plant Swap
in the garden of Wyatt LeFever
Kernersville, N.C.

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



645.—OXLIP. [PRIMULACEAE]
PRIMULA ELATIOR.

**Piedmont Chapter of NARGS
Board Members 2000-2001**

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

Past Chair: Barbara Scott, 1321 Chaney Road, Ra-
leigh, N.C. 27606; telephone (919) 859-6703. e-mail
bsscott_51@yahoo.com

Vice-Chairman/Programs: Mike Chelednik, P.O.
Box 20361, Greenville, N.C. 27858-0361; telephone
(919) 749-3340. email MikeChelednik@aol.com

Treasurer: Bob Wilder, 2317 Elmsford Way, Ra-
leigh, N.C. 27608; telephone (919) 755-0480. e-mail
wilder@nc.rr.com

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

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

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

The Trillium Newsletter Editor: Bobby J. Ward, 930
Wimbleton Drive, Raleigh, N.C. 27609-4356; tele-
phone (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, N.C. 27612; (919)
787-1933.

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

**Niche Gardens
Retail Mail Order
Perennial Nursery for Sale**

Niche Gardens nursery and fabulous display gardens of 2-3 acres with 5 additional acres to expand and possible house site is for sale. Ideal location in the mild climate of the N.C. Piedmont in the Research Triangle Park area where culture and a sound economy prevail.

Successful, nationally recognized, specialty nursery of 15 years focusing on perennials, many South-eastern natives and wildflowers plus choice trees, shrubs and ornamental grasses. A fabulous trained staff in place to keep operations running smoothly during the sale and transition.

Owner has health challenges and is willing to help with transition.

An incredible opportunity for someone with a dream and passion to own and operate a specialty retail perennial nursery, already well established.

Selling price, including land, \$417,625.

For further information, you may obtain a Business Prospectus. Email request to kimhawks@ipass.net. Or write Niche Gardens, 1111 Dawson Road, Chapel Hill, NC 27516; or telephone Kim Hawks at 919-942-7404.

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.

**Annual NARGS Meeting
in Pittsburgh
on April 25, 26, 27, and 28, 2001**

This will be an excellent opportunity to see some of our most treasured wildflowers in their native habitat, an area which has been famous for two centuries. John Bartram sent glowing dispatches back to Europe when the U.S. was still a British colony, all about the wild plants of the Youghiogheny River Valley.

The meeting is hosted by the Allegheny Chapter of NARGS. The theme is "Wildflower Gems of the Allegheny Region." Speakers include Fred Case on trilliums and Paul Wiegman on the natural gems you will see on area field trips. Workshops are scheduled on subjects such as trough building and planting. There is a river cruise planned for the Annual Banquet. Local highlights include a native plant and wildflower propagation center, a new rock garden at Phipps Conservatory - partially sponsored by the NARGS, the Laura Louise (Timmy) Foster drawings at the Carnegie Library, and Frank Lloyd Wright's Fallingwater.

If you have never walked these trails in late April, you don't know what you are missing. Six nurseries are already lined up for the plant sale and several more are pending. What a great opportunity to get some exciting new plants for your garden. There will be a judged plant show.

For further information or registration forms contact Gloria Schneider, Registrar, 120 Pineview Drive, Wexford, PA 15090. Phone 1-724-935-1867. E-mail nargs2001@aol.com



931.—HOMER'S MOLY?
ALLIUM MAGICUM. G. 144.3.
White, greenish or purplish behind. 1 ft.
June--July.

The Wyatt LeFever Garden
Kernersville, N.C.
Spring Picnic, Potluck, and Plant Swap
May 12, 2001
Noon

The garden is about three acres and is primarily a shade garden under huge native pine and tulip poplar trees. It is underplanted with hundreds of hostas and rhododendrons—many of them seedlings. There are also trilliums, asarums, arisaemas, ferns, and various wild flowers, rare shrubs, and trees.

The garden has grass trails throughout, accessible by golf cart for anyone needing assistance or unable to walk the distance or grade. The garden is located on the site of the Blue Ridge Fish Hatchery, where there are thousands of koi and goldfish for viewing as well.

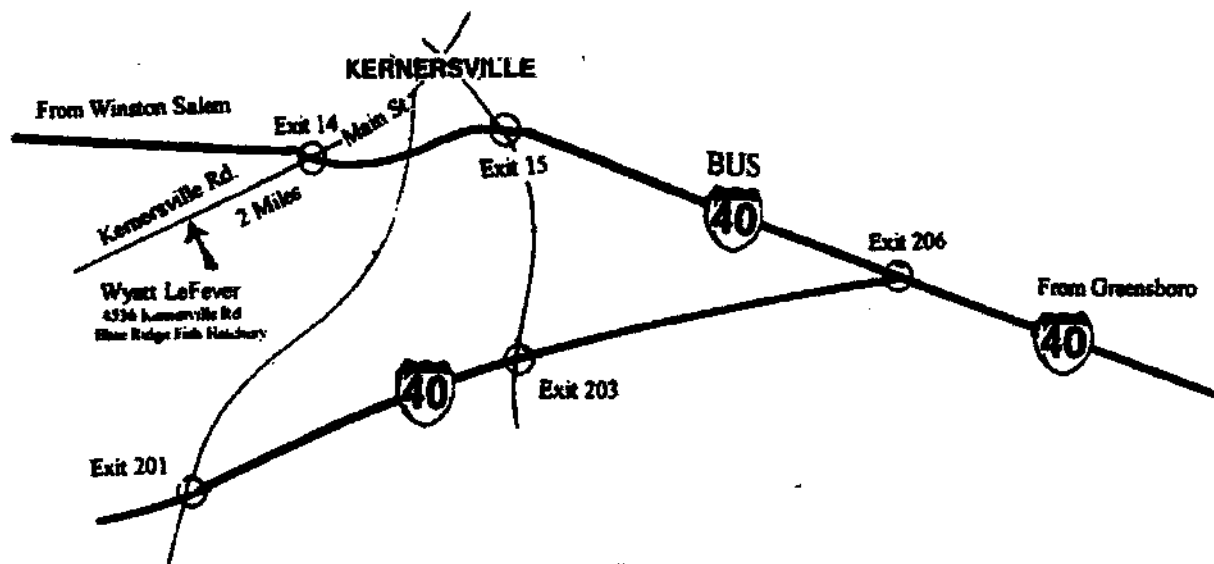
When approaching Kernersville from the west or the east on Interstate 40, you must exit onto Business I-40; exit # 206 when coming from Greensboro and Exit # 188 when approaching from Winston-Salem and the west.

From Business I-40, take Exit #14 onto South Main Street (from Greensboro you will exit right and then turn left onto South Main; from Winston-Salem exit right and then turn right. South Main Street becomes Kernersville Road.

The LeFever Garden is located two miles on the left just past Sedge Garden Nursery. You will see a sign for the Blue Ridge Fish Hatchery on the left, which is the location of the LeFever Garden.

Telephone 336-788-3845 for information or directions clarification. The address is 4536 Kernersville Road. Members: please bring a potluck item (vegetable, meat, breads, or dessert). The Piedmont Chapter will supply liquid refreshments.

Also bring plants to swap with other members.



Chair's Comments

by Marian Stephenson

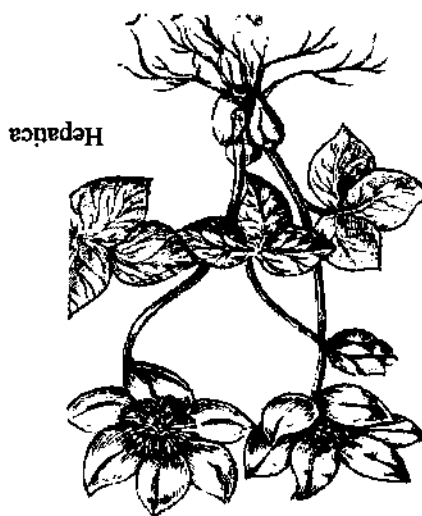
I want to encourage you to come to the end-of-year May potluck picnic at Wyatt Lefever's incredible garden near Greensboro. It's a bit of a drive, but definitely worth it. Wyatt has hundreds of rhododendrons, many of his own crosses, intermingled with choice selections of woodies, bulbs and perennials. The picnic date is May 12, a week earlier than regular meetings, hopefully to catch the peak blooming time. This is an experience you won't want to miss—and not an overstatement! See the directions and more information on page 13.

It's been almost two years since the present board was elected. By tradition rather than bylaws, the term of the chair and three ~~members-at-large~~ has been two years. Also, by tradition, the board has tried to identify members to serve who have demonstrated their support by their willingness to work! The Seed Exchange of 1997 and 1998 provided this opportunity.

Elections of officers and members-at-large will be held at the April meeting, with the new board assuming duties following the May meeting. Nominations from the floor will be accepted or you can submit nominations to the chair. You are invited to propose individuals for election to any office or board position. It is required that any person nominated will have been asked beforehand and will have agreed to be nominated. The board will present a slate for consideration at the April meeting.

Let me thank those of you who attended the February meeting and completed the survey of membership. It was helpful in thinking about the work ahead and very nice that you shared a glimpse of yourself. I appreciate your responses.

Mailed February 28, 2001



Expires July 2004
Bobby J. Ward & Roy Dicks
930 Wimbleson Drive
Raleigh NC 27609

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Piedmont Chapter of NARCS
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