



The Trillium

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

Vol. 14, No. 3

Chapel Hill-Durham-Raleigh, N.C.

July 2004

NARGS Piedmont Chapter Speakers Fall 2004–Spring 2005

September 18, 2004: **Richard Olsen**, Raleigh, N.C.:
"The Search for the Obscure: Uncovering Rare
Plants and Gardens"

October 16, 2004: **Tony Reznicek**, Ann Arbor, Mich.,
"Islands in the Tropical Sky: Venezuela's Lost Flora
of the Tepuis"

November 20, 2004: **Frank Galloway**, Bolivia, N.C.,
"Plants of North Carolina's Green Swamp"

January, 15, 2005 Members' slide program

February 19, 2005: **Larry Mellichamp**, Charlotte,
N.C.: "Bog Gardening"

March 19, 2005: **Ozzie Johnson**, Marietta, Ga., "Treasures from China and Japan: Plant Collecting Two Ways"

April 16, 2005 **Lindie Wilson**, Charlotte, N.C.: "Elizabeth Lawrence and My Garden"

April 2005 Members tour of the Green Swamp (led by Paul Jones)

May 2005 Members spring picnic (TBA)

All meetings begin at 10:00 a.m. at the Totten
Center of the North Carolina Botanical Garden,
Chapel Hill.

Program arranged by Mike Chelednik

Plant Portrait . . .

***Ruellia* 'Black Beauty'**

By Mike Chelednik

Every year I grow a myriad of new plants from seed. These come from the seed exchanges of garden societies such as NARGS and The Alpine Garden Society (U.K.), friends (and non-friends who have something I like), and commercial seed resources such as the Archibalds in Wales and Sally Walker in Arizona. And every year a few plants stand out due to their fine foliage, blooms, vigor, or resilience in the face of my lackadaisical care.

One of my favorite plants in recent years has been *Ruellia* 'Black Beauty', which I received (as seed) from both NARGS and the AGS seed exchanges. The genus *Ruellia* is a member of the Acanthaceae, the acanthus family. It's a New World genus, stretching from the southern third of North America through much of South America. *Ruellia humilis* is a common plant in dry woodlots throughout much of North Carolina. I have loads of it on my property in Harnett County, where I recently moved. It's fairly showy, but has a reputation for weediness, at least in the garden. Forms of *Ruellia brittoniana*, a native of the Deep South, including some very dwarf forms such as 'Katie', have also become popular in cultivation in the past ten years.

Ruellia 'Black Beauty' is a perennial that blooms the first year from seed. It forms a short (perhaps 3" tall) rosette of dark burgundy, somewhat spatulate foliage, and blooms from July through early fall with comparatively large (to 1" wide) pale lavender

see *Ruellia* continued on page 2

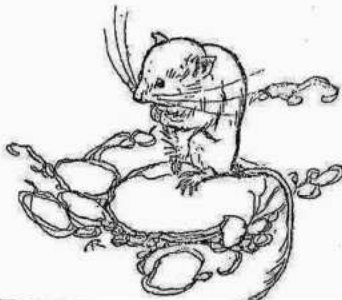
flowers held close to the rosette. The individual blooms suggest a petunia (a common name for some members of the genus is "wild petunia") with a somewhat crinkled texture. Plants easily grow in sun or light shade, adaptable to any soil provided it's reasonably well drained. Plants can tolerate short periods of drought as well. Propagation is via seed, which is easily collected. Plants will self-seed, but in a very modest way, and the resultant seedlings are very easy to transplant. The plants are well suited to rock gardens and other areas where smaller plants are showcased, and show off dramatically against silver- or gold-leaved plants. I have an idea it would look wonderful growing amid a gold-foliaged groundcover such as *Veronica repens* 'Sunshine'.

The background surrounding the plant is obscure. I obtained the plant (indirectly) from Alexej Borkovec in Silver Spring, Maryland. He's promoted the plant, and, I believe, named it. It's also sometimes sold as "*Ruellia ciliata* forma (or variety) *depressa*," which is most certainly incorrect, as "*ciliata*" isn't a valid species name for the genus. My theory is the plant is a selection of an offering from Woodlanders Nursery (Aiken, S. C.) about a decade ago, a purple-foliaged form of *Ruellia ciliosa*, a species native from South Carolina to Florida. Regardless, the plant is an awesome selection for rock gardens in the South.

Availability of *Ruellia* 'Black Beauty':

Mr. Borkovec continues to offer seed in the NARGS seed exchange, and I may have seedlings available at this fall's Piedmont Chapter seedling sale on September 18. Siskiyou Rare Plant Nursery offers plants (as *R. ciliata* var. *depressa*), and I know John Foushee of Big Bloomers (Sanford, N.C.) has a start, so he should be offering it in the near-future. A quick web-search revealed a few other nurseries listing it as well, so it shouldn't be hard to find.

[Mike Chelednik lives and gardens in Harnett County, North Carolina.]



Our Fall Plant Sale at September 18th Meeting

At our September 18 Piedmont Chapter meeting, we will have our annual fall seedling sale. The sale is managed by Kirt Cox and other volunteers.

Although this event is usually referred to as the seedling sale, note that, it could more accurately be described as a member propagated plant sale. Good plants of all shapes, sizes, and seniority are needed. Even if you have not been tending flats of seedlings or operating your automatically misted rooting chambers, you can almost certainly contribute. Look around your garden and you are likely to see some choice specimens that are eager to be divided. Some others may have seeded around a bit or sent out a runner or rhizome or two — although preferably not too extensively or invasively.

Participation is simple. Bring plants in clean pots and label each pot; we won't have time to do it that morning. We encourage you to pot up your contributions early, so they will have some time to establish, rather than waiting until the day before.

We will start setting up when the Totten Center opens at 9:00 a.m. on September 18, and will be eagerly accepting plants at any time between then and the start of the sale.

Richard Olsen, our speaker, starts at the standard 10:00 a.m. time with the sale beginning immediately afterwards. And remember that contributors will lead the way at the start of the sale.

If you wish further information or would be willing to assist with setting up the plants on the morning of the sale, please contact Kirt at (919) 489-7892 (h) or <kirtandcarolyn@mindspring.com>.

Election of Chapter Officers

At our September 18th chapter meeting, we will hold election of chapter officers. The Piedmont Chapter Board recommends the following for your consideration:

Chapter chair, Bobby Ward;

Board members at large, Marlyn Miller and Tom Harville;

Newsletter co-editors, Marian Stephenson and Dave Duch.

Leaving the board is Donna Maroni.

Book Review . . .

Both: A Portrait in Two Parts, by Douglas Crase. New York: Pantheon Books, 2004. ISBN 0-375-42266-8. 310 pp., Hardback, \$24. Available from the NARGS Book Service.

Reviewed by Bobby J. Ward

In 1974, the American Rock Garden Society jointly honored Dwight Ripley and Rupert Barneby with the Marcel Le Piniec Award, the society's esteemed recognition for botanical explorations that enlarge the knowledge of rock garden plants and increase horticultural materials available for gardens. In the write up of the award in the *ARGS Bulletin* (June 1974), Lincoln Foster noted that the two men had formed an ideal symbiosis through their forty-eight years of association till Ripley's death in December 1973 (Barneby lived till December 2000). Their partnered lives blended the worlds of botany, art, music, and literature, and are chronicled in *Both: A Portrait in Two Parts*.

The depth of their botanical knowledge was all the more remarkable because Ripley and Rupert were self taught, not professionally trained botanists. Each was formally schooled in languages (between them they were able to read and write in at least 30 languages and probably were fluent in half that many). In addition, Ripley was a published poet and artist (some of his drawings appear in *Both*, including a whimsical dust jacket illustration of Rupert with a flower pot of *Primula* growing out of his hat).

Both provides evidence of Barneby's immense scholarship as a botanist. He was associated with the New York Botanical Garden for 50 years, specializing in western U.S. flora and becoming an expert in the Leguminosae (bean family) and Menispermaceae (moonseed family). He published, according to Crase, 7,676 pages of articles and monographs in 263 different publications, probably more than any other botanist of the twentieth century. His most famous was the *Atlas of North American Astragalus* (1964). Barneby was the publishing author of 2,562 taxa (species, subspecies, and varieties), including many mimosas and cassias, discovered five dozen new species, and is honored with 25 species and four genera named for him. The first plant Barneby named was a plant they found at Yucca Flat, Nevada in 1941: a parsley-like member of the Apiaceae, *Cymopterus ripleyi*, which honors Ripley in the specific epithet.

According to Crase, Ripley had his first rock garden at the Spinney, his home in Sussex, where he and Barneby, while still students at Harrow, col-

lected, identified, and made herbarium specimens of 1,138 plants there and in 1939 published *A List of Plants Cultivated at the Spinney, Waldron, Sussex*. Ripley was a long time member of the Alpine Garden Society, even before moving to the U.S., and he contributed nineteen articles to the society's *Quarterly Bulletin*, primarily on native flora of Nevada, Colorado, Utah, and Oregon, and earlier on flora of the Mediterranean and Spain. Six species of plants are named for him, including *Astragalus ripleyi*. Ripley was the author of the unpublished manuscript "Etymological Dictionary of Vernacular Plant Names," a dictionary of plant nomenclature and their meanings in various European languages. It resides in the archives of the Metz Library of the New York Botanical Garden (fodder for someone to dust off, edit, and publish). It is said that his Latin dictionary had margin notations correcting the dictionary.

Both notes that Ripley and Barneby built two rock gardens, the first at their home in Dutchess County, N.Y., near Wappingers Falls, and later at Greenport, Long Island. Photographs and descriptions of the gardens are included in this book. Between them, they wrote seven articles for the *Quarterly Bulletin* of the American Rock Garden Society, most in the early 1950s, after they had moved to New York from California.

The biography, *Both*, is organized in two parts, covering Rupert Barneby first (the author met him and became friends in 1975). The second part covers Dwight Ripley, whom the biographer never met. There is unavoidable overlap, often resulting in a non-linear telling of their entwined lives.

Ripley and Barneby are recognized giants in the botanical world of the twentieth century and their botanical skills have been widely touted. *Both* illuminates these achievements and provides a full portrait of the societal and artistic circles these two men inhabited.

Editor's Farewell

I began as editor of *The Trillium* in January 1991; now after 14 years and 63 issues (Barbara Scott edited five issues in 1995-96), this is my last issue as the chapter editor. I appreciate all the contributions from various writers over the years. You writers have made *The Trillium* successful. Thank you.

--Bobby Ward

NARGS Seed Exchange: It's That Time of Year Again!

by M.K. Ramm

Piedmont Chapter members of NARGS should start collecting seeds of their favorite plants to send to the NARGS Seed Exchange. As a reward for donating seeds, you may choose 35 packets instead of 25 when the list arrives after Christmas. Last year, only four Piedmont members donated seeds. I'm sure many other members would be interested in obtaining seeds of some of our local natives.

While the array of plants available to gardeners has greatly increased in the last few years, the lists from the major seed companies have become increasingly limited. Belonging to NARGS and participating in its Seed Exchange is a convenient way to gain access to a fascinating array of plants. The offerings are not limited to rock garden plants.

The deadline to submit seeds is November 1—but the sooner the seeds ripen, the better to send them in.

Send seed donations to NARGS Seed Exchange, 234 Crawford Rd., Hillsborough, NC 27278.

For further information, see NARGS web site at <www.nargs.org/seed/exchange.html>. Or email me at <mkr@cs.duke.edu>.

Join NARGS, the National Organization

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.

As a new member you will receive a free copy of the NARGS publication, *A Rock Garden Handbook for Beginners*.

Send payment to Jacques Mommens, Exec. Secretary of NARGS, P.O. Box 67, Millwood, NY 10546. Or on the Internet: www.nargs.org.

Piedmont Chapter of NARGS Board Members 2003 - 2004

Chair: Marian Stephenson, 305 Clayton Road, Chapel Hill, NC 27514; telephone (919) 942-5820; email <marian42836@yahoo.com>

Vice-Chairman/Programs: Mike Chelednik, 223 Blairwood Drive, Fuquay-Varina, NC 27526-5661; telephone (919) 260-8772. email <m20361@yahoo.com>

Treasurer: Bob Wilder, 2317 Elmsford Way, Raleigh, NC 27608; telephone (919) 755-0480. e-mail <wilder@nc.rr.com>

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: Todd Lasseigne, 6220-305 St. Regis Circle, Raleigh, NC 27606. Telephone 919-851-3039 email <taxodium@mindspring.com>

Board Member-at-Large: Kirtley Cox, 2539 Sevier St., Durham, NC 27705; telephone (919) 489-7892; email <kirtandcarolyn@mindspring.com>

Board Member-at-Large: Dave Duch, 1422 Lake Pine Dr., Cary, NC 27511; telephone (919) 467-0653; email <dduch@bellsouth.net>

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@nc.rr.com>

Piedmont Chapter of NARGS Positions of Responsibility

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

Fall Plant Sale Chair: Kirtley Cox, 2539 Sevier St., Durham, NC 27705; telephone (919) 489-7892; email <kirtandcarolyn@mindspring.com>

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Chair's Comments

by Marian Stephenson

I want to thank all of you for an enjoyable four years as chair of the chapter. I've appreciated your participation in the meetings, auctions and plant sales. It was especially nice to have you share your gardens with other members in May 2003 and with the January 2004 slide presentations. All in all, I've had a good time doing it and it was fun getting to know many of you better.

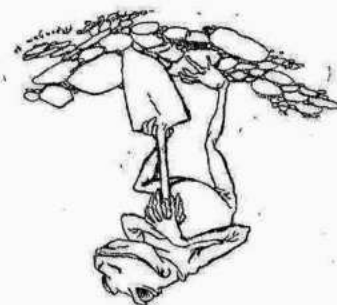
In September, I will turn the reins over to Bobby Ward, who will do his usual excellent job in the chair role. We do have a few other changes. Donna Maroni decided that four years on the board was really enough, so with her departure, we have invited Marlyn Miller and Tom Harville to serve as members-at-large. Dave Duch and I will become co-editors for *The Trillium*, beginning our first issue in early September. We will actively seek your contributions to it.

In order to reclaim N.C. sales tax paid on certain costs of the May '04 NARGS Annual Meeting, I am initiating getting non-profit status for the chapter. Kirt Cox will be our consultant to this process. In order to qualify for this status, we must adopt by-laws as a form of governance (or at least as guidelines). You'll hear more about this later, but I promise to make it brief and painless. It's mostly protocol and probably won't affect our casual atmosphere at all.

Finally, you'll be glad to know that the May "big" meeting went well and we were able to fatten the treasury some. This will support our program and speaker costs for quite a while.

I hope you're having a wonderful summer. My garden is beautiful and I bet yours is too.

See you in September.



First Class Mail

Bobby J. Ward
Editor, *The Trillium*
North American Rock Garden Society
930 Wimbeldon Drive
Raleigh, NC 27609
USA