



POTOMAC VALLEY CHAPTER
NORTH AMERICAN ROCK
GARDEN SOCIETY

PVC BULLETIN

January-March, 2011

Jim McKenney, Editor jimmckenney@jimmckenney.com
<http://www.pvcnargs.org/>



**If you haven't done so already, renew your membership for 2011
See back page for the list on members who haven't yet renewed
Send your check for \$15 to
Margot Ellis, 2417 N Taylor St., Arlington, VA 22207**

Calendar

March 19, USBG - Bobby Ward, NARGS past president and author of JC Raulston biography, *Chlorophyll in His Veins, "JC Raulston Horticultural Ambassador"*. Books available for purchase.

March 20, Paul Botting's home - planting of troughs for May plant sale.

April 2, Hillwood Museum and Gardens, Washington, DC -- Jody Fetzer, PVC member and Hillwood Horticulture Supervisor, and Bill Johnson, Hillwood Horticulturist, "Restoration of Hillwood's Rock Garden"

April 17, 1-4 pm, Tours of Bob & Audrey Faden's Garden and Mike Cassidy's Garden, Alexandria, VA

April 29 - Trip to Mt. Cuba in Delaware; carpool. See notice below.

May 14 - plant sale. Green Spring Gardens Park.

May 21 - Members' plant exchange hosted by Patricia Goins, Fairfax, VA

June 17-19, New Hampshire - NARGS Annual Meeting, "Discovering the Flora of New England". See NARGS website for more information. Carpooling possible.

June (TBD) members picnic OR a series of members' garden visits.

September (TBD) Members' plant exchange, hosted by Lynn Blei, Potomac, MD

September 22 (Thursday) location TBD - John Grimshaw, "An Ethiopian Adventure: A Journey to the Bale Mountains with the Alpine Garden Society"

Deadline for next edition April 15, 2011

Although Jim's name is on the masthead, Communications Chair Alice Nicolson has cobbled up this combined January+March issue of the Bulletin. Jim's faithful computer died recently and his replacement machine won't be available until later in March.

Welcome to our new members !

Wayne Amos, Alexandria, VA
Kathy Andrews, Rixeyville, VA
Carolyn & Paul Beck, Oak Hill, VA
Jane Collins, Arlington, VA
Ann Covalt & Duncan Brown, Arlington, VA
Carol Edwards, Washington, DC
Chris Fleming, Chevy Chase, MD
Carole Galati, Silver Spring, MD
Robin Gross, Bethesda, MD
Chris Herbstritt, MD
James Hughes, University Park, MD
Barbara Katz, Bethesda, MD
Norman & Marty Last, McLean, VA
Richard & Judy Loranger, Fairfax, VA

Skip March, Alexandria, VA
Beth Tindal, Arlington, VA
Mike Welsh, Takoma Park, MD
Marianne Willburn, Brunswick, MD

Message from the President

The days are growing longer. I just put in a bulb order and I am optimistic that they will come at a convenient time. I've already ordered too many things and I am concerned of their arrival in April when I will away several weeks. In fact, I will miss our April 2 date at Hillwood with our very own Jody Fetzer. If you haven't been, you are in for a treat. Hillwood has restricted visitation.

Leftover seed from NARGS will be arriving soon and will be available at our meetings. Please do not take seed if you feel you will not be able to propagate at the appropriate time of year.

If you are interested, review the calendar and you will see that we have two open garden visits on April 16. One is Mike Cassidy's garden and the other will be Audrey Faden's garden. They are both well done. If someone would like to write a review for the newsletter, it will be most welcome. Further and more important, we would love to know if your garden could be open for members of the Chapter. Just email me (bettyannespar@aol.com) and we will list your name in the newsletter. Also add any preferences you may want to specify (such as "by appointment only", which I highly recommend.)

Our newsletter will be a homegrown type this time. Please bear with us as Jim starts up his new computer when it arrives.

Our next meeting is March 19 at the US Botanic Garden with an over-the-top presenter in Bobby Ward. Due to fire regulations we are limited to 50 attendees so register ahead with sastrickler@verizon.net

Pencil in the plant sale, May 14 at Green Spring Gardens. All members are needed to help.

I need to run now and admire my Edgeworthia chrysantha, which has 50 upside down umbrellas but no blooms yet. I'll keep you posted.

Betty Spar

NARGS News

Book of the Month Review now on NARGS WIKI

Be sure to check out the wiki book of the month review on NARGS website.

There were 2421 hits on the BotM site at 6-ish (March 1), so you can track how soon people look at it by checking List Pages for March. How about that, and we only started in January.

Go to the NARGS website, select wiki on left hand side, select book of the month review and enjoy.

Betty Spar

Team Leader BOM for NARGS

Help Needed

The bimonthly *Bulletin*, like its predecessor newsletters, has always been an important tool in keeping the PVC membership informed about club happenings. Our current editor, Jim McKenney, has done the job for six years, but he would like a break for about a year. Is there anyone else in our membership who would be willing to take up the proverbial red pencil and become the interim editor, beginning this summer? Jim is willing to continue indefinitely if no one steps up, but here's a chance to give it a go if you've been thinking you would like to try it.

The skeleton of the job involves getting the up-dated calendar, reports from the chair, the treasurer, program and membership committees and other announcements from time to time. Additionally, the editor seeks out members who are willing to write short articles on subjects of interest to our members. We like to send the *Bulletin* out to members electronically and/or have them access it on our website, as this is the least expensive way to do it; people can print their own hard copies or simply read it on line. For those who have no email or who find it difficult to access online, we do send out print copies. (At this time there is no extra charge for this service but the Board is considering applying one in the future.)

If you have any interest in doing this job and are comfortable generating copy and formatting a newsletter, please contact Jim McKenney; he can give you details. jimmckenney@jimmckenney.com 301-770-1867

Trough Planting

Sunday, March 20, spring begins according to my calendar. And that date is the day we meet at my house to plant the troughs we made last fall to sell to the public. If you remember, each of us was to make one for PVC-NARGS and one or more to keep. I will provide soil and some appropriate plants for the troughs. However, you should also bring plant material that you think will do well in troughs. I will be donating some Semps, Sedums, Talinum, Orostachys, miniature Hosta, Cacti, and a few other things. I will also provide several soil mixes, some tufa rock, turface, turkey grit, and plant labels. Other suitable trough plants could be small dianthus, Houstonia, small Primula, and Cyclamen. Anything easy, small, and bearing interesting foliage or a long bloom period will fit the bill. Something that goes dormant in the summer is not appropriate. Neither is anything that will get real big in a hurry.

Plan to get here around 10 AM. Bring something for lunch and some bottled water or soda. If you have other troughs you want to plant for your own use, bring them too. We can keep at it all afternoon if you like. If it rains, we can work in the carport.

Directions: Take I-270 toward Frederick, MD. Turn off I-270 on MD 28 West toward Darnestown MD. Proceed about 5 miles to the intersection of MD 240 (Quince

Orchard Road). Continue on MD 28 West to the second traffic light. That will be at Riffle Ford Road. Turn right and proceed to the third left (Riffleford Court). Our house is on the corner. Park on the shoulder in the court.

Paul Botting

PVC-NARGS trip to Wilmington, Delaware

On **Friday, April 29** PVC will hold an all-day field trip to Delaware. We will first head for Mt. Cuba (an ex Dupont Estate, Wilmington, Delaware) where at 10:00 a.m. Vic Piatt (Curator) will on site explain his construction of the rock garden (re his seminar to us last year) and then we will be led by a docent on tour of the terrific expansive/extensive labeled native wildflower area which should be very near spring peak. Thereafter we will go cross town to Frog Hollow, the creative garden of Eve and Per Thyrum (not to be missed!!!) who have kindly offered us their place (all weather outside design) for our byo bag lunch during and following which we will basically be with the Thyrums and on our own to 'inspect' their gardens, etc. (e.g., hopefully we can see close up Per's designed greenhouse solarium) and 'contrivances'. We (Freddi and I with friends) have repeatedly visited both places as part of the Wilmington House and Garden Day and always find these changing landscapes fascinating!! Please mark your calendars and save that Friday for a wonderful time.

Details

0. **Please forward 'yes, we'd love to go' responses to me at e-mail (peachnfrog66@comcast.net).** There is a **\$5 fee** per person to visit Mt. Cuba; **get the money to me** at least THREE (3) weeks before trip so I can get \$\$ to Mt. Cuba.

Dick Hammerschlag
7106 Deer Valley Road
Highland, Maryland 2077

0. Transportation will have to be on your own. Car-pooling is recommended; I could try to help coordinate those that need it.
 - . **Directions:** Off 95 in Wilmington, take exit 7, (Delaware Ave./Rte. 52), bear left when you reach Rt 52. Follow Rte. 52 N (Pennsylvania Ave.) for about 4 miles to Rte. 141 S (Centre Rd)
Take Rte. 141 S approx. 1 mile to Barley Mill Road (first traffic light)
Turn right onto Barley Mill Road
Proceed on Barley Mill Road for approx. 4 miles
Please do **not** turn on to Mt. Cuba Road - go past Entrance to Mt. Cuba Center is on your right
Follow signs to Guest Parking lot
Walk to the Main House
 - 4. Directions to Eve and Per Thyrums (AKA Frog Hollow) will be provided at Mt. Cuba, but we can also follow each other straight across town. Thyrum's residence is 19 Crestfield Rd. off of Foulk Rd. (Rte 261) just north of Naaman's Road (Rte 92).
Looking forward to a swell time!!

Dick Hammerschlag 301 854 2674

The Expanding Garden - Growing Trees

Sometimes I feel like Tevye in *Fiddler on the Roof* when he sings "If I were a rich man" about all the things he would do if only he were wealthy. My own thoughts in that vein are more along the lines of what I would grow had I unlimited space. Given my great interest in growing a diversity of trees and shrubs and our very limited land, it gets more and more difficult to find ways of fitting in new woody plants, even with the overflow areas on the adjacent YMCA property and nearby small, city park. Although we have great latitude on the Y land with regard to plantings, every tree or shrub to be planted in the park has to be negotiated one by one. And once planted in the park the trees and shrubs are hardly protected, even (especially?) from city workers, such as the time a garbage truck backed over a well established 'Texas White' redbud that we had been growing for four of five years. I always have a sense of anticipation filled with dread when I go out to look at the trees we have growing in the park. Will everything be all right or will something be dead, missing, broken or weed-whacked?

What got me dreaming about having unlimited room for planting was a recent conversation I had with a fellow tree lover. He mentioned that when he bought his present 19 acres, the trees that he had planted at his parents' house were just small enough to move to his new place, so he now has on his property trees that he planted 50 years ago. And he still hasn't run out of room, he said.

Fifty years ago I was living with my parents in the Bronx in a three-room apartment. Although I had always been interested in nature and natural history, and my interests in them had taken on a more academic bent, thanks to a wonderful field biology course that I took in high school, gardening was completely alien to me and would remain so until I married a farmer's daughter in Kenya some ten years later. Even then it wasn't until we bought our first (and current) house in Alexandria about 26 years ago that we finally had a tiny patch of land that we could call our own.

I am reminded of our vacation in the Seattle area in 1996 where I had attended a professional conference. We were lucky enough in those days to know Alice Lauber, then NARGS recording secretary, who lived there. She suggested several private gardens that we should try to see, including some that were not listed as open to NARGS visitors. We had a grand time, also visiting Bellingham Gardens, the University of Washington's Arboretum, several nurseries, including the original Heronswood, and the slopes of Mt. Rainier (twice).

We also made a brief foray into British Columbia to visit the garden—I believe that 'arboretum' would be a more descriptive term--of Francisca Darts. She had lived there for ages and in her mid eighties had recently been widowed. Her land had been willed to the town of Surrey to become a public garden after her death. And what was this dear octogenarian doing when we met her? Why planting more trees, of course.

Does one ever get too old to plant trees? I think not. One may not be able to raise mature trees in one's remaining years, but it's amazing what one can get in 10

years of growth, or even less in some cases. For example, a hybrid catalpa that we grew from seed flowered in its third year. Of course, we are still waiting for the Dove-tree (or Handkerchief Tree, *Davidia involucrata*) to flower, but perhaps this will be the year. Watching woody plants grow from year to year can be a reward in itself.

It is one thing to decide to grow woody plants but quite another to grow them from seed. For some species the seeds need to be fresh. For others they may take years to germinate. Named cultivars and varieties generally do not breed true from seed, but they may produce some interesting offspring. Although it might not make a lot of sense to grow common or readily available trees and shrubs from seed, some rarer kinds may not otherwise be obtainable as plants. For the past two years the NARGS seed list has contained a

smattering of interesting woody species. If you have the room, be adventuresome!

As I write this my thoughts shift to a group of tree and shrub seedlings that we have germinated this year, a small Maackia (*Maackia tenuifolia*), a Chinese yellowwood (*Cladrastis wilsonii*), supposed Clammy locusts (*Robinia viscosa*) that probably aren't correctly named, hybrid Bladder-senna (*Colutea x media*) and Golden Chain (*Laburnum anagyroides* 'Aureum'). Which ones will grow up and be planted out? What conditions do they need? Where would we plant them? And then there are all of those seeds in the refrigerator, needing a cold period to germinate. Does anyone have a few acres they don't know what to do with and no deer?

Robert Faden

As of March 1, the following have NOT renewed their membership in PVC-NARGS
Send your \$15 to treasurer Margot (see front page) or give it to her at our next meeting.

Abdu, Bell, Bendet, Boasberg, Bohl, Bordelon, Botting, Bruns, Callender, Christmus, Cobb, Cross, Curtis, Davies, Durst, Espy, Eversmeyer-Ellis, Faden, Feely, Findlay, Galloway, Gimpel, Goins, Grenfell, Holmes, Jenz, Houston, Lawrence, Leininger, Lorenz, McClain, McIntosh, McLaughlin, Miller, Noonan, Omand, Peck, Peters, Phair, Pillera, Roland, Roth, Russell, Sackett, Schor, Smith, Sterrett, Trudeau, G. Washburn, Wilcox, Wolf, Yang, York,

PVC Bulletin
Jim McKenney, Editor
11127 Schuylkill Rd
Rockville, MD 20852