



# SISKIYOU SUMMITS

APRIL / MAY NEWSLETTER



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open

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Janet Crawford

### Goodwill and Greeter

Faye Hutchings

### Librarian

Kathy Allen

### Archivist

open

### Program

Phyllis Gustafson

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Lynette Davis

### Refreshments

Peggy and John Hirsch

### Telephone Tree

Joe Shelton

## Members' Plant Sale

Saturday, April 18

In the garden of Baldassare Mineo,  
2821 Cummings Lane, Medford

10:00 a.m. set-up

10:30 a.m. sale

Baldassare has once again graciously offered to host our Plant Sale. The annual Spring Sale is sure to provide lots of choice plants to round out your rock gardens and perennial borders. Bring your seedlings and rooted cuttings by 10:00 a.m. Saturday morning and have prices noted, so that we can make quick work of organizing the sale tables.

There will also be a brown bag lunch and potluck dessert following the sale. So bring your own portable lunch and a dessert to share.

*Directions to Casa d'Italia:* Baldassare's address is 2821 Cummings Lane, Medford 97501.

The closest major street is Table Rock Rd.

(1) To access Table Rock from I-5, take the Central Point exit, turn left and head east. Make a right on Table Rock.

(2) To access Table Rock from Hwy. 99 headed west, turn right by National Furniture Warehouse and Jack-in-the-Box.

(3) From Jacksonville, turn left on Table Rock from 238 headed towards Riverside.

From northbound or southbound Table Rock. Turn right (from south) or left (from north) from Table Rock onto Midway Rd. Cummings is the first intersection. Turn right and Baldassare's is there.

Questions? Call Baldassare Mineo at 772-8787 or Kelley Leonard at 899-5603.

## Monthly Meeting - Tuesday, April 21

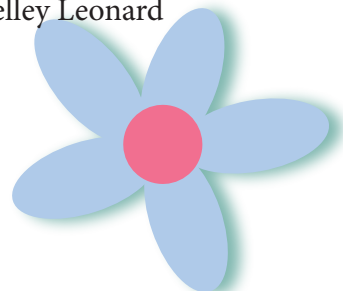
### Speaker: Josef Halda

Master crevice garden designer and plant explorer Josef Halda will visit us in late April.

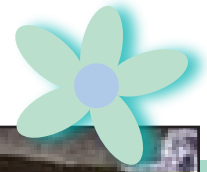
\*\*\*Note the change of meeting dates from the 2nd to the 3rd Tuesday, in April only.

We didn't have the theme of his talk by press time, but Phyllis reports that Josef will probably speak about his last trip to Burma.

April meeting refreshments: Dessert - Kathy Pyle;



# Chapter News



## May 12 Meeting

### “Lichens: They’re On The Rocks” and “Alpine Plants: Just How Do They Live Up There?”

by Roger Rosentrator and Ann DeBolt

We’ll be treated to a double delight in May with a husband/wife speaker team presenting talks on lichenology and alpine plant morphology. Roger Rosentrator (“Lichens: They’re On The Rocks”) is a botanist/ecologist working for the Bureau of Land Management, who is interested in plant conservation and lichen taxonomy. He has worked on several restoration ecology projects including the President’s Forest Ecosystem Management Assessment, and the Interior Columbia Basin Plan. He is interested in sagebrush steppe habitats and in the role of lichens in ecosystems. He is a trainer for the National Forest Health Monitoring Program and is interested in Rangeland health monitoring methods. Roger has studied rare plants in Idaho for over 30 years. He earned his PhD with a dissertation on the relationship between lichens and sagebrush!!

Ann DeBolt (“Alpine Plants: Just How Do They Live Up There?”) earned a B.A. in botany at the University of Montana, an M.S. in botany at Oregon State University, and is currently employed as a Natural Communities Specialist at the Idaho Botanical Garden in Boise, ID. Prior to joining the non-profit world in 2007, she worked for more than twenty years as a botanist for the National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, and U.S. Forest



Lichens at Grizzly Peak

Service. Her “exposure” to alpine plants was in Montana, where she worked in Glacier National Park and co-authored *Alpine Plants of Glacier National Park* (in *Rocky Mountain Alpines*, Timber Press, 1986).

Chapter member Roger Hutchings met Roger and Ann on the Penstemon Society trip last summer. He is organizing field trips for mid-May during Roger and Ann’s visit. Stay tuned for more details!

## Member Phyllis Gustafson Receives NARGS Award of Merit at Portland Conference



Phyllis receives the NARGS Award of Merit in Portland

Our own Phyllis Gustafson was recently honored by NARGS with a 2009 Award of Merit. Awards chair Marguerite Bennett made the

announcement during the Saturday night presentation at the Western Winter Study Weekend. Phyllis was nominated by Baldassare Mineo and other chapter members for her generosity both to the chapter and NARGS and her willingness to share knowledge, plants, and her beautiful garden in the interest of attracting new rock gardeners. THANK YOU, PHYLLIS! And congratulations!

## Chapter Garden Tours Set for May 23

Janet Crawford, this year’s Garden Tours chair, is planning a May Saturday full of scenic local gardens. Tour details will be announced at the Plant Sale and by email. You can reach Janet at [jaycrawf@q.com](mailto:jaycrawf@q.com) or 774-9561.



# Chapter News *continued*



Our March program featured five master propagators from the chapter. From top, Kathy Allen explained three different sowing methods for alpine seeds; Peggy Corum and Kelley Leonard offered tips on rooting cuttings and Peggy shared her fern spores-on-pumice-rock technique; Dale Sullivan showed us how to grow lilies from scales; and his co-worker Scott Vergara wrapped it up with some practical tips on preparing stock plants for propagation, taking cuttings, and how to use a grafting knife safely.

## From Our Library

We are missing the chapter copy of *Pacific Northwest Wildflowers* by Phyllis Gustafson and Mark Turner. If you have this book or know its location, please notify chapter librarian Kathy Allen before she calls out the Book Police!

## Welcome to New Members

The Siskiyou Chapter is honored that Dave and Jan Dobak of the Columbia-Willamette Chapter are also joining us as members. Dave has agreed to put together our official chapter website in preparation for the 2010 Western Winter Study Weekend.

## North American Rock Garden Society Siskiyou Chapter Minutes of the February 10, 2009, General Meeting

**Call to Order:** At 7:05 p.m.

President Kelley Leonard called the meeting to order.

**Minutes:** Minutes of the January meeting were approved as read.

**Treasurer's Report:** There was no treasurer's report.

### Committee Reports:

**Speakers** – Phyllis Gustafson announced the programs for the rest of this fiscal year as follows: March 10 – Cuttings workshop, April 21 – Joseph Halda, May 12 – Roger Rosentrator and Ann DeBolt. Two other events include a field trip with Ian Young on Wednesday March 18 (meet at Phyllis' house at 9:00 a.m.) and the annual spring plant sale to be held at Italio Garden on April 18.

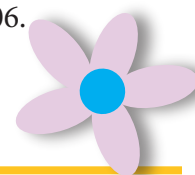
**Western Winter Study Weekend** – It is not too late to sign up for the 2009 conference in Portland.

**Refreshments** – Refreshments for tonight's meeting were furnished by Bob and Lola Hardiman, Kathy Allen, and Paula Springhart.

**Library** – Kathy Allen stated that

## Chapter Bulletin Board

Have something to buy, sell or trade? Are you looking for a special plant? This is your space to advertise something of interest to the group. Former chapter member Sandy Marks is giving up her rock garden. She has lots of rocks she wants to sell. Her garden is made up of four pallets of moss rock from Hilton Fuel and she is taking offers. She paid \$170 a pallet, but realizes she will get only a fraction of that. Her number is 664-8106.



Phyllis and Mark's book is missing from the library. New donations and acquisitions are a video of Butchart Gardens, and books entitled Pruning and Training, High and Dry, Patio and Stone, and Deck Scaping.

Members were reminded to return library books after one month.

**Garden Tours** – Janet Crawford suggested Saturday May 23 as a tentative date for tours of two rock gardens followed by a potluck. Kelley has a printed copy of the NARGS seed exchange program available for members to read. Dale Sullivan brought several flowering plant specimens for members to study.

**Unfinished Business:** There was no unfinished business.

**New Business:** There was no new business.

**Program:** Scott Vergara narrated a slide show and power point presentation entitled "Tibetan Treks."

**Adjournment:** The next meeting will be held on March 10, 2009, with members sharing their experience with cuttings.

**Meridel Hedges**, Secretary

## Western Winter Study Weekend 2009 Recap

Eight Siskiyou Chapter members participated in the Western Winter Study Weekend held March 13-15 in Portland. This was not only the annual Western conference but also the annual meeting and the 75th anniversary of NARGS (see the report by Phyllis below and articles on pg. 7). Everything was top notch, from the service at the Doubletree Lloyd Center to the mega plant sale to the multifaceted and imaginative gardens open to visits during the conference. Kudos to the Columbia-Willamette Chapter for a job very well done. We were really wowed by the glazed troughs filled with goodies that graced the banquet tables — all made and grown by chapter members.

On the Friday morning of the conference, five of us embarked on a trip south on I-5 to tour a few gardens. We ended up in Sherwood and got to see Ginny Maffitt's garden. Especially impressive were the *Arcostaphylos canescens* she rescued from Santiam Pass and an olea tree from New Zealand with wonderfully textured bark. Ginny suggested we drop by Bella Madrona and Xera Plants, a wholesaler dedicated to xeriphytic plants. Bella Madrona located off a country lane, is full of surprises. Garden owner and designer Geoff Beasley has a witty and whimsical approach to landscape design. One of our favorites was the Circle of Time. I especially enjoyed the Funnel Tree and the colorful conifer and heather vignettes that each featured a very simple piece of sculpture as the focal point. Owner works wonders with salvaged scrap metal, thrift store finds, and other odds and ends. He and his partner host summer fundraisers with the band Pink Martini as the musical entertainment. (PM is playing at Britt this summer!)

Xera Plants was open Friday only to those who attended the WWSW. We were able to find hardier manzanitas, ceanothus, and other plants that thrive in dry conditions. Paula and I both picked up 2-gallon editions of *Osmanthus* sp? in full, sweetly fragrant bloom.

The conference plant sale was in full swing by mid afternoon Friday. There we spotted our chapter friends Dean Stout, Chris Ebrahimi, and Loren Russell amid all the plant treasures for sale. And what a sale it was! From miniature narcissus to erythroniums, dwarf conifers, and native alpines of Oregon, there was something to tempt everyone.

“Revitalizing the Rock Garden” was an appropriate

theme for a look back at 75 years of the North American Rock Gardening Society. The Western Winter Study Weekend gave us a many perspectives on what “revitalizing” means, from new approaches to design to growing alpines from seed. To share what we heard with you, here are a few reports from chapter members Phyllis, Paula, Kelley, and Kathy:

### Rex Murfitt, “Rock Gardening in North America, Then and Now,” reported by Phyllis Gustafson

*“The Presents of 75 Years”*

We went to dinner Friday night and there were no balloons, no birthday cake, but a lots of good friends and smiles. Then we moved to the lecture room and the program started with Rex Murfitt. Well here it was — that special PRESENT. I hope all enjoyed him as much as I.

No club ( yes, how I've always wished NARGS was called a “club,” not “society”) can look forward without now and then looking back to its roots. Rex is the perfect person to lead us on a tour of places, adventures and people through the years. He has been there, met them and raised the plants.

The younger members may have thought that this program was not aimed at them. IT WAS! If you are really interested in the plants, where they grow and most importantly how to grow them, then you must read the books and journals. The information you will find was mined from the experiences of our gardening forefathers and mothers. Everything was here — from seeing places and many of the people we read and hear about, to plants like the saxifrages growing on tufa at StoneCrop Nurseries. Rex first planted them for Frank and Ann Cabot when they were developing the gardens at their famous New York location.

The Botanical Garden when being developed in Edmonton by Patrick Seymour, and even “Mt. Halda” at SRPN were shown. All three gardens are open and looking better than ever today.

Another interesting picture was of the original plant of *Phlox adsurgens* 'Wagon Wheel' when Boyd Kline and Laurence Crooker first grew it.

Other gardens shown were our rock gardening 'godparents' Linc and Timmy Foster's Millstream, Barry Porteous' garden in Ontario, Sheila Paulson's in Calgary, and Ernie and Marietta O'Byrne's just up the road in Eugene. I hope you all get to read about these special places or see them in person. What a way to celebrate NARGS' 75 birthday!

*continued on next page*



**David Sellars, “Chaos in the Rock Garden: Putting Theory into Practice” reported by Kelley Leonard**

*“Western Winter Study Weekend Talk Knocked my Socks Off”*

David Sellars doesn't mess around with cute little anecdotes. He goes straight to big, universal scientific truths. His presentation, entitled “Chaos in the Rock Garden: Putting Theory into Practice” gave me many “Aha” moments. David's Power Point presentation was flawless and well paced. The information was presented with beautiful photographic examples along with really funny inserts of quotes by Reginald Farrar. Reginald Farrar was British, and sought to educate the gardening public on the “correct” way to build rock gardens. Without going too far astray, I will just say that we rock gardeners have come a long way from his stilted and awkward style. David's examples of nature favoring increasing complexity in habitat, and how rock gardeners should follow nature's lead were spot on. David used three examples of the levels of complexity. First, and the most simple was a brick wall, with the bricks lined up and the joints evenly spaced. Second came the bark of a tree with areas that appeared much more random, yet the overall effect had a pattern. Last were the random scribbles from a computer. Really random scribbles! David laid out the argument that there are more opportunities for plant life where rocks are in a seemingly chaotic jumble compared to evenly placed and spaced rocks. He had many photos to support his argument. Plants thrive more in fell fields and disturbed areas next to road cuts. The moraine areas at the bottom of rocky outcrops and other such areas of jumbled rocks can catch seeds, organic debris and snow/water to create the protected habitats that plants growing in extreme conditions need to survive and thrive.

Yet in all the chaos in nature, there are patterns. The small rock outcroppings echo the mountain peaks in the background. The sharp angled rocks show the same silhouette as the mountain range they are found on. So, in chaos, there are patterns, you just need take the time to look.

It was a beautiful and rational talk. As an artist who sews, paints, draws, makes jewelry and gardens, I can attest to David's insights as being the key to creating objects that please the human eye. We instinctively know there is a “rightness” in chaos. And in that chaos, if you look very carefully, you will see the patterns.

*Editor's Note: David Sellars bases his current chaotic rock garden design theory on the field of fractal geometry, as first explained by French mathematician Benoit Mandelbrot. You experience fractal geometry every time you view a film with special effects backgrounds, eg. “Jurassic Park.”*

**Ian Young, “Choice Bulbs for the Rock Garden,” reported by Paula Springhart**

Ian Young's talk on “Choice Bulbs for the Rock Garden” was very informative and accessible to all levels of expertise. “Sow them thick, they do enjoy the company,” he urged in his Scottish burr. Even to the extent of using styrofoam packing peanuts as “surrogate bulbs” to help crowd the real bulbs in the bottom of a pot, he further emphasized “always pack the pot!”

In Ian's greenhouse, some pollinating is done by hoverflies and bees, but most of it is done by Ian with a fine brush. The results are cross pollination with abandon!

When the plants come up, Ian fertilizes with small amounts of potash (listed on labels as “high K”). “Drop the powder and water up,” he says.

His efforts are abundantly rewarded with a flood of flowers (crocus, narcissus and fritillaria). In and out of the greenhouse are blooms of luminous purples, yellows, and checkered mauves. Ian's slideshow was truly worthwhile.

**Rebecca Lance, “Life and Death in the Rock Garden” reported by Kathy Pyle**

*“Remove the Fear Factor and Learn to Live Dangerously in the Rock Garden”*

I wish more in the audience could have understood the humorous asides in Rebecca Lance's talk on “guerilla” rock gardening, but she was recovering from a bad cold and difficult to hear at times. She is a very funny speaker and tells it like it is. What I took away from her talk —besides a list of colorful eriogonums to try —was inspiration on how to attract younger gardeners into growing alpiners. We need to dispell the mystique of “rock gardening.” In other words, we need to sell it as a solution, not a religion.

Showing us how her rock garden evolved, Rebecca told of the many pests and defensive tactics she's adopted in her Sierra foothills garden. She works as a full-time registered nurse and also maintains a small nursery, Granite Gardens. As an evangelist for rock gardening, she's had many amusing encounters with

*continued on next page*

new gardeners who buy her plants and quickly kill them in diverse and imaginative ways. She has learned that this trend benefits her business in the short term, but newcomers to alpine gardening need to be slowly oriented with a few reliable, torture-proof plants if they are to be truly converted. Rebecca feeds her customers' new plant lust with more difficult plants until they're "hooked" and totally addicted!

I've heard a lot of industry marketing presentations recently on Gen X and Gen Y trends that do not favor spending much time in the garden. NARGS, too, suffers from a depleting membership as older members die or become incapacitated and no younger enthusiasts appear to take their place. For Gen X, the young parents, time is precious and when they're not chaperoning their kids to soccer games and tae kwan do tournaments, they're on family trips. Do-it-yourself weekend projects, a la HGTV, are what appeals. For Gen Y, which lives in the virtual world, retro-looking, low-maintenance succulents have become a big draw.

How can NARGS chapters plug into the trends and inspire young people? First, keep the education as simple as possible. Marketing research shows the younger generations tend to be intimidated by the whole gardening thing. Secondly, present rock gardening as an extension of the natural world and an ideal way to provide habitats for native plants. This approach relates rock gardening to the strong environmental ideals of Gens X and Y. Third, demonstrate that rock gardening is a way to enjoy a garden without having land, and that containers can be created with simple projects. So how about "Build



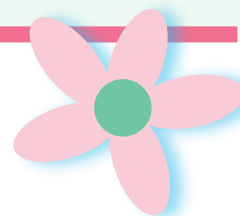
"Funnel tree" at Bella Madrona

a trough garden in a weekend" workshops as a chapter endeavor?

Member "take homes" from the conference: Paula vows to practice chaos and mix up plants in beds, after hearing David Sellars's talk. She also plans to plant bulbs a lot more densely in pots. Kathy accidentally happened upon a meeting of the Pacific Bulb Society during happy hour and became excited at the prospect of growing bulbs from seed. She plans to join the Society in 2009 and benefit from seed sources and the considerable growing expertise of Society members. After learning about John Lonsdale's experiences with woodland gardening in Pennsylvania, she's finally figured out the right location for erythroniums, trilliums, and other shade-loving ephemerals in her own garden. Phyllis fell in love with some miniature narcissus and brought a few home to try.

## Western Winter Study Weekend 2010: 11 Months and Counting Down!

This postcard was distributed at the Portland WWSW last month. Committees are shaping up - sign-up sheets will be on the table at the Plant Sale and April Meeting.



**ALPINE TRAILS**  
FROM THE SWITCHBACKS TO THE SUBURBS

**NARGS WESTERN WINTER  
STUDY WEEKEND 2010**

MARCH 5-7 MEDFORD, OREGON



**PROGRAM FEATURING**  
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For more information, contact Kathy Pyle, [kmpyle2@yahoo.com](mailto:kmpyle2@yahoo.com)  
or Registrar Paul Otto, [ottopauld@hotmail.com](mailto:ottopauld@hotmail.com).

# North American Rock Garden Society Celebrates its Diamond Anniversary

*(Diamonds are rocks, after all!)*

## Celebrating NARGS 75th Anniversary

by Bobby J. Ward

In 1934, North Americans were listening to Paul Whiteman and Duke Ellington on the radio and were watching Clark Cable and Claudette Colbert on the silver screen. In March of that year, 250 American garden enthusiasts gathered in the Commodore Hotel in New York City to formally launch the American Rock Garden Society. The organization grew to over 30 chapters by its 60th anniversary in 1994, the year it changed its name to the North American Rock Garden Society (NARGS) to recognize its large Canadian membership. Now with 35 chapters, the society celebrates its 75th anniversary in 2009.

My introduction to NARGS was in 1989 when I joined my local Piedmont Chapter, which was organizing its first Winter Study Weekend. I attended that meeting and made the acquaintance of long-time NARGS members, many becoming fast friends over the years. Expert speakers there sparked my abiding interest in bulbs and hellebores.

I soon discovered that there is much diversity in gardening styles and plant interests among the NARGS members across North America, reaching from Alaska through the Canadian provinces to all corners of the U.S. Regional differences in climate, rainfall, and temperature, push gardeners to adapt. Verna Pratt in Alaska does not garden the same way that Ev Whittemore does in North Carolina. Todd Boland in Newfoundland may not fully appreciate the gardening challenges that Marion Jarvie faces in Ontario. Larry Thomas's admirable eleventh-floor terrace garden in New York City is far different in space and concept from the rock gardens at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver or the Denver Botanic Gardens.

I learned that dryland steppe plants of the Colorado inter-mountain basin won't last a minute in the warm nights, high humidity, and the summer heat of Delaware or Maryland without amended soil or raised beds. But we seldom give up if we fail the first time, often relying on pass-along information from more experienced rock gardeners. With better understanding of a plant's requirements, such as drainage, soil type, the right amount of shade (and a bit of a green thumb), we usually can have success. NARGS members freely interchange the terms "alpine plants" and "rock garden plants," and we don't always agree on what constitutes a rock garden or how to define it. Thus, we grow plants in small troughs, rock walls, raised beds, on a large mounds (berms), in woodland settings, in alpine meadows, or among natural rock formations. For the neophyte or would-be rock gardener, placing native plants in scale among local rock is often the first, tentative beginning of "rock gardening fever."

North American rock gardeners can grow an extremely wide range of plants. Jane McGary, an Oregon bulb grower and editor of the NARGS publication, *The Rock Garden*

Quarterly, notes that "Rock garden plants comprise both evergreen and herbaceous perennials and shrubs, and bulbous plants; a few annuals or biennials may be admitted, such as alpine poppies. In addition to flowering plants, rock gardens may include dwarf conifers, small ferns, and small-scale, non-spreading ornamental grasses."

There are many styles of rock gardening practiced by NARGS members. Pamela Harper, who gardens in coastal Virginia, has pointed out that the great woodland forests of North America have provided a backdrop for "a distinctive American style [of rock gardening] that has evolved naturally in regions of rocky woods rich in wildflowers." These include spring ephemerals, such as Trillium, Claytonia, and Erythronium. Tom Stuart of New York, says, "what North America has contributed more than methods is in the extension of plant materials." He notes the presence of cactus and mosses in NARGS members' rock gardens.

Our members often develop specialty gardens for their interests in a certain genus (perhaps *Penstemon*) or in bulbs (such as *Crocus*). Many rock gardeners grow plants from seed, planting dozens--even hundreds--of pots each year. Some foreign members join NARGS specifically to acquire seed from the annual seed list, which generally consists of about 4,000 selections. Panayoti Kelaidis, of the Denver Botanic Gardens, has said that North American rock gardening is a vibrant community of plant enthusiasts who share not only a complex and fascinating art, but also great bonds of friendship. "It fosters enthusiasm and excellence and honors biodiversity and human diversity: a tall order indeed!"

***"Rock gardening fosters enthusiasm and excellence, and honors biodiversity and human diversity: a tall order indeed!"***

***– Panayoti Kelaidis***

North Carolina gardener Elizabeth Lawrence wrote that "the cultivation of rock plants is the highest form of the art of gardening . . . Gardening is an art, and the rock garden is its purist form. All gardeners become rock gardeners if they garden long enough."

As NARGS heads towards its centenary, I look forward to its continual inspiration and support for its members in this most rewarding of pastimes.

[This article originally appeared in the *Scottish Rock Garden Club's The Rock Garden* 31 (122): 6-7 (January 2009), Anton Edwards, editor. Bobby J. Ward lives in Raleigh, North Carolina. He is a past president of NARGS and is currently its Executive Secretary.]

## North American Rock Garden Society

Join today. NARGS is for gardening enthusiasts interested in alpine, saxatile, and low-growing perennials. Annual dues in the U.S. and Canada are \$30, payable in U.S. funds. VISA/Mastercard accepted.

Benefits of membership include: *Rock Garden Quarterly* with articles on alpiners and North American wildflowers, illustrated in color photographs and pen and ink drawings; annual seed exchange with thousands of plant species; study weekends and annual meetings in either U.S. or Canada; and book service to members.

Join on-line at <http://www.nargs.org> or write: Bobby J. Ward, Exec. Secretary NARGS, P.O. Box 18604, Raleigh, NC 27619-8604, USA

# Calendar of Events

Siskiyou Chapter meetings are held at the  
Medford Congregational United Church of Christ,  
1801 E. Jackson St., 7:00 p.m.

**April 18 – Members' Spring Plant Sale**  
In the garden of Baldassare Mineo, Medford

**April 21 – Meeting**  
Josef Halda, speaker

**May 23 or TBA – Garden Tours**  
Contact Janet Crawford for details (jaycrawf@q.com or 774-9561)

**May 12 – Meeting**  
Roger Rosentrator and Ann DeBolt speaking on lichens and alpine plant morphology

**May – Field trips**  
TBA - contact Roger Hutchings (rogerhutchings@charter.net or 772-9190)

**July – Camping trip with Emerald Chapter**  
Steens Mountains (exact date to be announced)

Many thanks to Jim Fonseca, CompuArt, in Haverhill, MA, for design of this newsletter.  
For more information on his freelance projects, contact [www.compuart.net](http://www.compuart.net).

FOLD

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