



Saximontana

Rocky Mountain
Chapter

North American
Rock Garden Society

October 2024

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2024 Awards Nominations

Do you know someone whose contributions to RMC merit recognition? Contact Kathleen Stewart, Mike Kintgen or Panayoti Kelaidist to nominate them for an award.

For the criteria for awards, log into the Members Portal and look for chapter_awards_desc on the website under Documents and Videos > Misc. Docs & Files > Awards

Mark your Calendars!

Saturday

October 19

FALL SYMPOSIUM

STURM AUDITORIUM

9 am - 3 pm

RMC Annual Banquet

Sunday

November 17

HICKORY HOUSE,

10335 S. PARKER ROAD

PARKER CO

12:00 - 3 pm

President's Outcrop

Steve Aegerter

Autumnal Greetings,

Yes, it is once again one of many people's favorite seasons. At every landscaping consultation, I ask the question, "What is your favorite season?"

Probably, over 70 percent say, "Fall", or a combination thereof.

And why not? With countless cloudless days strung together, mild temperatures, and the occurrence of severe weather nearly non-existent – why wouldn't it be one's favorite? And I didn't even mention one spectacular reason – fall leaf color.

That is why I ask that question: it offers insight into what type of shrubs I need to incorporate in the design. For example, I rarely plant lilacs – I know, I know they are spectacular in spring and oh that aroma. My! it just doesn't get much better than that. So why not lilacs? Well, the bloom is fairly short if we even get a bloom because of a late freeze. Then after that, one should trim off all those deadheads. After that, they are rather pedestrian at best and they are very susceptible to powdery mildew.

Why not plant something like Red Chokeberry, *Aronia arbutifolia*, that has spring color, summer berries, and then spectacular red fall foliage? Or a drought-tolerant native such as Three Leaf Sumac, *Rhus triloba*, with yellow spring flowers, edible fruits, and red-orange fall color. Simply said, these two examples offer more bang for the buck!

October is also the best month for planting perennials. Take two identical perennials, plant one in October and the other in May – come next September, which plant will be bigger? Well, by a large margin, the one planted in October. Why? There are several reasons, but two significant incentives are that perennials planted in the fall will be planted in a lot warmer soil – until probably after mid-December, so their roots continue to grow into early winter, and cooler day-time temperatures allow for easier establishment.

Talking about perennials – when I was a lad in the 50s I joined Speedy Seeders, a 4-H club where we designed our garden and grew annuals by seed. Then we made themed arrangements or showed individual specimens at competitions. There is a current similar club for perennials, although not part of 4-H, but rather NARGS, called Panayoti's Speedy Seed Savers. Please seriously consider joining – to qualify, simply save seeds from at least five perennials that you cherish and remit to NARGS.

All for now, see you in and around the rocks.

Fall Symposium

Symposium Schedule

- 8:30 Social get together
- 9:00 **Steve Aegerter and Randy Tatroe:**
Short and Sweet Business Meeting: election of 2025 officers
- 9:30 **Rod Haenni and Glenn Guetenberg**
- 10:30 **Mariel Tribby**
- 11:30 Lunch on your own
(Hive and Bistro are options but can be busy:
bring a lunch or drive to one of a dozen restaurants nearby.)
- 1:00 **Christina Alba**
- 2:00 **Rob Smith and Nicobolas Boynton-Steele**

STURM AUDITORIUM

9 am - 3 pm

Free -- for now

4 pm

Weather permitting, a get-together with speakers (and treats) at a nearby garden to be announced the day of the Summit.

Don't wanna miss this!

Who's Who -- 2025

Election of RMC Officers will be at the business meeting on October 19.

Most of the RMC board members have agreed to serve for one more year. Additional nominations for 2025 RMC Board positions will be accepted at the business meeting.

Or, if you would like to recommend someone or volunteer for a position, you may contact one of the [current board members](#) (page 12).

... and the nominees are:



NARGS Representative: Mason LeGrange

I'm excited to be running for the NARGS Representative position on the RMC Board of Directors. Originally from Houston, I've called Colorado home for the past 15 years, embracing the state's vast outdoor opportunities. From rock climbing and hiking to foraging and snowboarding, I've developed a deep connection with everything Colorado offers. My passion for rock gardening was sparked during explorations of Colorado's many ecosystems, from the foothills to alpine peaks. Although I'm still a novice, I am encouraged to expand my knowledge about the entire process and the amazing plants my wife, Madeline, and

I have already begun falling in love with. I'm especially grateful to my mentor, Tim Morgan, and to Steve Aegerter, who opened the door to this exciting opportunity.



Treasurer: Karen Berry

Karen Berry previously served as treasurer for the Jefferson Conservation District (a soil conservation agency started after the Dust Bowl) and the Coalition for the Upper South Platte (a watershed and forest health group). She also managed budgets for the Colorado Geological Survey and the City of Wheat Ridge. She gardens on a half acre lot in Wheat Ridge. As a geologist, Karen has always collected rocks and joined the club to learn how to put those rocks to good use.

Web Master: We are still looking for someone (you?)

The RMC uses a lot of technology to communicate with its members and manage memberships. Many processes are automated with several volunteer members helping with website content and membership data, so this is not a solo endeavor. The chapter needs a technology-centric leader to inform, educate and steer the RMC board and technology direction of the chapter. We will help train security and administrative tasks. If you can help the chapter, please call Panayoti at 720-979-1927 or email pediocactus@icloud.com.

?

Fall Symposium

Gateway to Rock Gardening”: Four Fresh Perspectives on our Art

9:30

Glenn Guenterberg and Rod Haenni will present on highlights from a September, 2023 tour of the Karoo in South Africa. Rod will also show the construction of two new crevice gardens in 2023, one in Littleton and one in Oro Valley, Arizona.

Rod Haenni

Adventures in Two Gardens and a Botanical Paradise

Rock gardening has been a passion for me for decades. I have traveled solo and with friends and family to many wild and cultivated parts of the world to educate myself on how the plants I wish to grow thrive in habitat to try to duplicate those settings in my own gardens. Two new gardens, each 1 1/2 years old, combined with many new plants for both a Zone 5 and a Zone 9 garden will continue to provide me with exciting garden experiences in retirement.



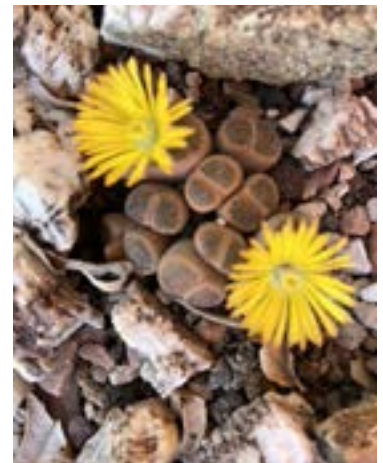
Succulent from the Karoo which Rod grows in his garden in Arizona. From south of Sutherland, one of the coldest regions of South Africa.

I will focus on mesembs that I grow in both gardens and especially ones that members of RMC-NARGS could consider for their gardens in Colorado.



Lithops bromfieldii, trialing this year

These are all in my Littleton garden.



Lithops lesliei var. *rubrobrunneata*



Rabiea albipuncta, with the much lighter green *Stomatium agninum* in the background

Glenn Guenterberg

The Western Cape Through the Eyes of An Enthusiast ... the September, 2023 Tour With Nine Fellow Travelers



Quiver Tree.

Glenn is an aerospace engineer with a Major in Gardening, acquired through endless hours of experimentation. He has a talent for hiring experts to build crevice and boulder gardens from big to pocket-size, built over the past eight years... all meant to be xeric. A few years ago he was President of RMC and before that was a member for time beyond memory.

My presentation will be a fast-paced review of the tour from our "enthusiast" viewpoint, probably starting with an annotated map of the route for context and ending with a few photos from an addendum Patrice and I did.



Kirstenbosch Botanic Garden



Snow on the Mountain.

Mariel Tribby

10:30

Rock Gardening in the Midwest at Missouri Botanical Garden



Explore a different plant palette with this introduction to the rock gardens at Missouri Botanical Garden. Mariel will cover her work over the past decade growing and yes... seeing many dryland plants die, in hot and humid St. Louis. She'll also cover the extensive renovation of the Heckman Rock Garden and stories of successful cultivation from lowland Missouri natives to high-elevation plants.





Christina Alba is a conservation biologist at Denver Botanic Gardens

Christine Alba

1:00

Conservation Biology at Denver Botanic Gardens—with a Glimpse Beyond the Garden Gate

I will give an overview of our DBG department's work, and expand more deeply on my own work within the larger framework of what goes on department wide. I can then switch gears to the Greece travelogue and how I uploaded all my plant observations from Greece to iNaturalist. Much of the conservation work we do in the Research department happens in wild systems across Colorado highlight how we use iNat as a platform to engage citizen scientists and do outreach.



Robb Smith

2:00

and

Nicolas Boynton-Steele

Creating Beautiful Winter (and summer) Gardens in Boise, Idaho through Plant Breeding

Robb Smith is a manager of Edward's Greenhouse—a premier nursery and greenhouse in Boise, Idaho.

Nicolas Boynton-Steele is a plant breeder specializing in Western native plants. Both have a keen design eye and a depth of plant knowledge that have made them horticultural luminaries of the Intermountain region. What Robb and Nich are up to has great import and relevance to Colorado gardening.

Their talk will introduce the climate and geographic location of Boise and their garden design theory as well as Nich's breeding work

RMC Annual Banquet Awards & Silent Book Auction

Sunday November 17

12 noon - 3 pm

[Hickory House](#)

10335 S. Parker Rd.

Parker CO

It's a BBQ buffet

\$25 per person

Space is limited to 80 people.

Send checks to Gesa Robeson, 1648
Yosemite St., Denver, CO 80220. Gesa
must receive your check by Monday,
November 4.

12:00	Business Meeting, Awards.
12:30 - 1:30	Lunch, Silent Auction Bidding
1:30	Short Break, Silent Auction Bidding Continues
1:45 - 2:45	Presentation by Don LaFond, Silent Auction Bidding Ends
2:45 - 3:15	Silent Auction Ends, Winners Declared

Richard and Ann Bartlett's Gift to our Chapter

Panayoti Kelaidis

Dick (as he liked to be called) and Ann Bartlett have been mainstays of the Rocky Mountain Chapter since early in its existence. Dick passed away just over a year ago and Ann has moved away from their Lakewood home. She has donated their extensive library of rock garden related books to our chapter. These books will be made available to members in the coming months in a series of silent auctions (too many books for just one!).

The Bartletts have served the Chapter in many ways, not least of which was when Dick served as chapter president during a difficult time in the chapter's evolution. Dick went on to become president of the North American Rock Garden Society. Ann served as membership secretary of the American Penstemon Society for much of the late 20th Century. The Bartlett home in Lakewood has hosted numerous garden tours for our society. This garden contains a wide variety of garden styles and an impressive array of all manner of alpines, xeriscape and woodland plants and was recently visited by the RMC Garden Angels!

Dick and Ann have presented to the Rocky Mountain Chapter on some of their amazing travels that took them over much of the globe, including South Africa, where they collected seed of *Helichrysum praecurrens*—introducing this gorgeous alpine to cultivation. That amazing plant is one of the best plants of that enormous genus for alpine gardens.



Helichrysum praecurrens in bud

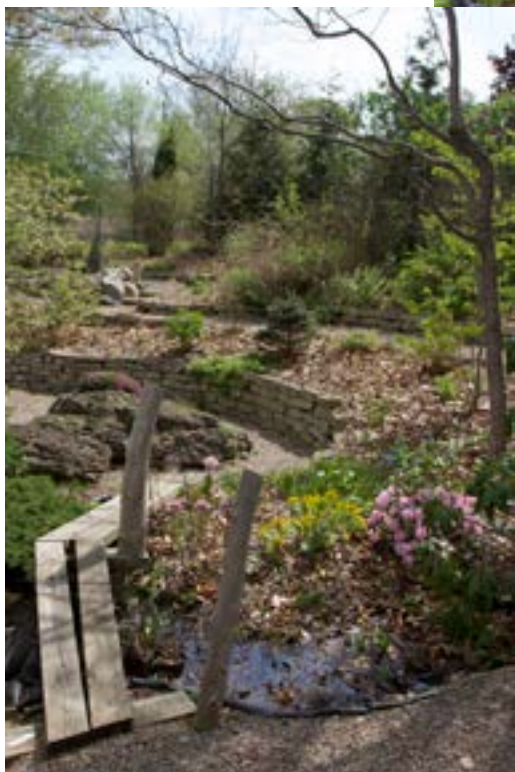


Don LaFond

Don LaFond is a master carpenter, teacher, plant junkie and long-time Michigander. He likes all plants, especially ones that are difficult to grow.

Gardening on an Old Sand Quarry

I garden on one acre in southern Michigan. We bought it in 1982. The land only had a motocross track, orchard grass, a few oaks and some red pines planted in the 1950s. In the early part of the 20th century it was a sand and gravel pit used for building gravel roads for access to the vacation cabins around the lake. The soil was just various layers of white and yellow sand and a bit of rock no bigger than a fist. As I was a gardener from the age of 5 or so, along with a house I wanted an English cottage garden, but pure sand does not lend itself to blowsy cottage style gardens. In 1988 Arrowhead Alpines opened near me. There, after spending an afternoon with Dick Punnet and Jacques Thompson (rock gardeners extraordinaire) another rock garden was born.



Some Saffron Crocuses

by Bob Nold

You may wonder at the title of this article, crocuses plural, but in fact there are more species in the genus *Crocus*, besides *Crocus sativus*, which yield saffron. Not high-quality saffron but from what I've read, not totally icky saffron, either. Having said that, I wouldn't bother growing these species for saffron, especially when the regular saffron crocus is so readily available and easily grown.

Before I get on with this, I'll try to answer the most obvious question: where I acquired all these crocuses. For that, you'd most likely need a time machine, to travel back to a time when all you had to do was write a check, mail it overseas, and get crocuses in return. Those days are gone, as most nurseries that used to ship to this country no longer do so, or if they do, you risk never seeing any crocuses, unless you follow import regulations to the letter.

In his monograph, Brian Mathew placed the saffron crocus in Subgenus *Crocus*, and in their own group, Series *Crocus*. Besides *Crocus sativus*, there is the species sometimes thought to be its ancestor, *C. cartwrightianus*. There are also *C. hadriaticus*, *C. asumaniae*, *C. pallasii* and its subspecies *turcicus* (now elevated to the rank of species), *C. oreocreticus*, *C. mathewii*, and *C. thomasii*. There are also two Middle Eastern species which are probably hopelessly tender, *C. moabitus* and *C. naqabensis*. I haven't had any luck keeping *Crocus thomasii* around for long, so I'll pretend it doesn't exist.



C. hadriaticus.



C. asumaniae.



C. pallasii.

I'm far too lazy to go into the distinctions between all these species; the differences are mostly in the way the styles branch and whether or not the throat is pubescent or glabrous. There is a good discussion of these differences in *Crocuses*, by Jānis Rukšāns.

All of these species produce overwintering leaves, which can sometimes exhibit a little browning at the tips. I place cages around the clumps of leaves for protection against rabbits and put a little pile of pine needles over the leaves if the temperature goes below zero.

Crocus hadriaticus has a few named varieties which have not persisted in the garden here: 'Annabelle,' 'Indian Summer,' and the one named for the village of Alepohori in Greece. Sometimes this is because the corms form cormlets so tiny it can take years for them to grow to flowering size, sometimes rabbits eat the leaves and that's the end of that, and sometimes the corms just die, because I planted them in an unsuitable place.

The form that has proved the easiest to grow is *C. hadriaticus* subsp. *hadriaticus* forma *lilacinus*. Not having all the time in the world, I call it *C. hadriaticus*.

There is also 'Purple Heart', which may be a hybrid, but grows well for me.





C. cartwrightianus 'Marcel'.

Crocus cartwrightianus has a number of attractive forms named by Antoine Hoog in The Netherlands: 'Marcel,' 'Michel,' and 'Halloween'. I won't tell you when the last one flowers. These have been easy to grow in my garden, in clay soil with gravel mixed in; the corms have increased over the years.



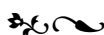
C. cartwrightianus 'Halloween'.

Crocus mathewii has some named forms, but I just grow the "plain" species. This has been very reliable for a number of years, but none of the corms has shown a tendency to increase. I purchased my corms before the price went up, but this is such an attractive species the money is well spent.

Crocus asumaniae is another easy one, as is, surprisingly, *C. oreocreticus*, which, as the name suggests, is from the mountains of Crete. It flowers in November here.

Both *Crocus pallasii* and *C. turcicus*, which used to be a subspecies, grow well here, though the former isn't doing as well as I hoped, because I stupidly planted it at the top of my sandpile, which is really too dry for it (and almost anything else). *C. turcicus* has done better, in ordinary soil.

So there you have it. All of these crocuses are native to the eastern Mediterranean: dry summers, with rain in autumn. I can provide the dry summer without even getting out of bed in the morning, but the rain in autumn means watering. This article also comes with pictures, which may be more interesting than all the words you've just read.



Welcome New Members!

Caryl Thompson

Randy Ridlen

Diane Graboski

Colleen Jones

Kathleen O'Leary

Diana Reavis

Gabrielle Starr

Chella DiMenza

Morganne Ball

Martha Rooney Saitta

Larry and Helen
Green

Dean Saitta

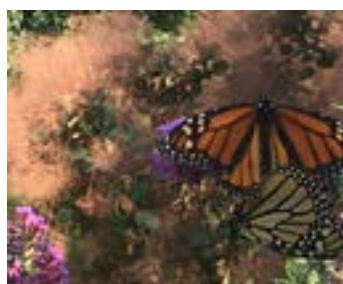
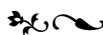
Donnie Barnett

Matthew Delgehausen

Michael Donato

Kelly Ambler

Dale Brown



Bees, butterflies and other invertebrate pollinators are now classified as wildlife in Colorado. Legislation effective in August 2024 allows the Division of Parks and Wildlife to study, protect and conserve them.

[Visit CPR for more info.](#)

Who's Who 2024

If you wish to contact the entire 2024
RMC Board, please us this address:

bod@rmc-nargs.org

President

[Steve Aegerter](#)

Vice-President

[Randy Tatroe](#)

Secretary

[Lee Recca](#)

Treasurer

[Ken Ray](#)

Web Master

[Hugh MacMillan](#)

Newsletter Editor

[Marilynn Mueller](#)

Member at Large – Metro

[Tim Morgan](#)

Member at Large – Non-Metro

[Cindy Reed](#)

Membership

[Gesa Robeson](#)

NARGS Representative

[Bob Skowron](#)

Past President

[Panayoti Kelaidis](#)

MEMBERSHIP FORM: Rocky Mountain Chapter - North American Rock Garden Society

Membership Options, circle one: (See website <https://rmc-nargs.org> for benefits or to enroll/renew online)

Individual = \$20 Household = \$30 Supporting = \$55 Patron = \$105 Life = \$305 \$ _____

PAPER SAXIMONTANA newsletter mailed to you, **Pay an EXTRA \$15/person per year:** \$ _____

NOTE: Names and contact information are published in the annual RMC Roster.

The RMC Roster is labeled "For Members Use Only". The Roster is shared with NARGS.

Total Due = \$ _____

TODAY'S DATE _____ **Check One:** New Member _____ Renewing Member _____

Name: _____

[Enter names as you wish them to appear in the Roster]

Address: _____ **City:** _____ **State:** _____ **Zip:** _____

Phone: _____ **Email:** _____

Optional 2nd Household Member Name: _____

Phone: _____ **Email:** _____

NEW INFORMATION? _____ **or CORRECTED?** _____ (Check one)

Make check payable to **RMC-NARGS**. Mail to Gesa Robeson, 1648 Yosemite St., Denver, CO 80220

New and existing members can enroll, renew & maintain contact info at <https://rmc-nargs.org>

Photos are by the author unless otherwise noted

Photos, page 8: LaFond and landscape orientation by Panayoti Kelaidis

Portrait orientation garden photos by Randy Tatroe

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