

January 10, 2022

CREVICE

ARGS GENERAL MEETING
Saturday, January 15th, 2022, 10 AM
Zoom Meeting

Zdenek Zvolanek,
Czech crevice gardener, designer and builder

At our January 15th virtual general meeting at 10 AM we will hear from Zdenek Zvolanek (ZZ), the famous Czech crevice gardener, designer and builder has been rock gardening for 40 years at the 'Beauty Slope' above village Karlik in the Czech Karst. His rock garden stretches in steep rocky terrain under former quarry. There are alpine plants from all over the world, among which there are examples of rare plants of the Rocky Mountains, Turkey, and Balkans.



Crevice is an occasional publication of the Alaska Rock Garden Society for small items.
The masthead is an excerpt from *Eriophorum scheuchzeri* by Rhonda Williams, used with permission.

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If you want to see additional beautiful pictures from his gardens, check out the CzechRockGarden Society's web site: <http://czrgs.cz/photogallery2.html>.

FUTURE ARGS PRESENTATIONS in 2022:

February 19 - also at 10 AM - we will hear from "our own" **Ed Buyarski**, who lives in Juneau where he operates a landscape business, and also runs a small home-based, plant nursery. They specialize in perennials, primroses, ornamental trees and shrubs, plus fruit trees and berry bushes. The nursery offers non-edible plants, however, we encourage lawn reduction, and food sustainability. For us he will do a presentation on primulas - growing condition and also on growing them from seeds.

March 19 at 10 AM we will be hearing from **Jane McGary**. She will do a presentation on fritillaria. She worked at UAF for 12 years and is now living in Oregon.



Two NARGS Webinars coming in 2022:

Same great deal as before: If you're not yet a NARGS member (You must be one to watch these webinars!) join for \$40 (lots of great benefits) and then you're eligible to get one webinar for just \$10 (regularly \$25)!

Watch for details: www.nargs.org

Saturday January 15: "Succulents on the Rocks" (Starts at 6:30 AM AKST, but will be recorded for later viewing at your convenience)

[<https://www.nargs.org/nargs-rocks-succulents-buy-ticket>]

What are the presentations?

Who can't fit a trough on their balcony or patio? Succulents thrive in troughs—and **Lori Chips**, the indisputable queen of "Troughdom" (she wrote the book on it!) will demonstrate the techniques she's used for decades as the alpine specialist at Oliver's Nursery in Connecticut.

Jay Akerley grows a wide spectrum of succulents in rainy Vancouver, but also on the frosty heights of Canada's mountains where frost can occur in any month. He'll share his strategies for success, as well as the range of toughies that will take both mild winter rains and Arctic blasts of frost.

Amanda Bennett has created both the rock garden and an ambitious cactus and succulent garden at Atlanta Botanical Garden where she is now Vice President. Amanda has found an astonishing range of cacti, agaves, and other succulents that tolerate both Atlanta's hot humid summers and often rainy winters.

Vince Russo has created one of the most beautiful rock gardens featuring a wide range of western American cacti, which he has combined with classic alpines and an increasing range of African succulents in the suburbs of Detroit.

Rod Haenni has experimented (and succeeded) with a wider range of Zone-5 hardy cacti and African succulents in his gorgeous rock garden. As Vice President of the Cactus and Succulent Society of America (and long-time member of NARGS) he's helping pool and bridge the expertise of both specialist groups.



Kiamara Ludwig, Russell Wagner, Walker Young, Brian Kemble are all horticultural professionals with deep history in California's East Bay area public gardens. They have combined their talents to test a wide pool of plants at the public crevice garden at the Gardens at Lake Merritt in Oakland's winter wet Mediterranean climate.

Saturday February 19 "Rock Gardening Does Meadows"

**The Rock Garden Meadow:
A Contrast and Relief from the Rocky Garden**

Panayoti Kelaidis

If you are in a bonsai club, you're expected to have a lot of little trees beautifully trained in pots and not necessarily anything else in your garden. I've visited many a succulent collector in Southern California where the entire garden was bristling with cacti, aloes, agaves—anything succulent and not much else. The same phenomenon occurs with many collectors: dahlia, hosta, conifer, iris—most any specialist collection is often arrayed in rows often surrounded by bare soil. There are "native plant gardens" where any plant from beyond an arbitrary political boundary is eschewed, banished, reviled!

And then there are rock gardeners. I suppose you have alpine gardeners in Britain who may possess only teeny plants in pots—but in North America rock gardening is truly catholic (not necessarily in the religious sense! I'm Orthodox after all): I don't think I've ever visited a rock gardener in our continent who didn't have some special trees, unique shrubs, a patch of woodland and often a pond, a bog and perhaps even a dry spot with some cacti.

Rock gardens aspire to the peaks, but we are always nestled in reality. Our art exemplifies the Taoist principle expressed in chapter 11 of the *Tao Te Ching* by Lao Tzu:

"Mold clay into a bowl
The empty space makes it useful....
Therefore, the value comes from what is there
But the use comes from what is not there."



Perhaps the best example of a “not there” of rock gardening would be a meadow. The “alpine lawn” has been a feature described in many rock gardens—which can manifest itself in any number of forms. In Colorado many of us have patches of buffalo grass (*Buchloe dactyloides*) or blue gramma grass (*Bouteloua gracilis*) which are the dominant short grasses of the Great Plains. These provide an ideal matrix for spring and fall bulbs—not to mention perennials like *Liatris punctata*, that benefit from the competition of grass roots. For others a lawn can be a few square feet or yards of thyme or veronica that provide a contrast and relief from the rocky garden presence and venue for social plants.

Anyone who’s designed a meadow knows it’s every bit as tricky as creating a crevice or other rock garden. I’ve noticed a half dozen or more books on the subject published in just the last few years. Midwestern designers like Roy Diblik have raised the tall-grass prairie to new heights (so to speak) and I was transfixed when I visited Great Dixter: the “lawns” there are fantastic anthologies of indigenous orchids and all manner of wildflowers that have become increasingly rare in overpopulated Britain.

I invite you to sign up for NARGS last Webinar of this winter season scheduled for Saturday February 19th. This will be the first time I know of that an entire symposium has been dedicated to the creation of meadows and the use of grasses and graminoids in rock gardens. The talks are being orchestrated by Kenton Seth, better known for his crevice garden creations around the world: Kenton designs all manner of gardens, and meadows are especially near and dear to his heart. I have no doubt this Webinar will be revelatory and great fun: do check the NARGS website (www.nargs.org) in the coming months for further announcements and a sign up to this seminar!

For some views of a Colorado prairie check out this post: <http://prairiebreak.blogspot.com/2017/09/prairie-daze-magical-preserve-north-of.html>