

Newsletter of the Capital Hudson Iris Society

Volume 23

Number 3

March 2016

2016 Calendar

Sunday, March 20th, Meeting, 1:30 p.m.,
East Greenbush Library, Master Gardeners
Virginia Dorwaldt and Ronnie Siegel
“Composting Made Easy.”

Sunday, April 10th, Meeting, 1:30 p.m.,
East Greenbush Library, Master Gardener
Phyllis Rosenblum on Growing Vegetables

Saturday, April 16th, 9:00 a.m. - noon,
Rain date Sunday, April 17th: **Siberian Dig
and Potting Party** at Euthemia's house,
bring clumps of named Siberian irises to be
divided and potted for our May 15th Sale.

Sunday, May 15th, 9 – noon. **Siberian Iris
and Perennial Sale,** Main Square Shoppes,
318 Delaware Avenue, Delmar.

**May 23-May 28: American Iris Society
Convention** in New Jersey/Pennsylvania.
Most of us will go on Wednesday, returning
Sunday morning. For full information, go to
<http://ais2016convention.com>.

Saturday, June 4, Annual Iris Show,
Bethlehem Public Library. Open to the
public from 2-4 p.m. An opportunity to
show your prized named irises. Contact
Kathryn Mohr for additional info at 952-
4995.

CHIS Contacts

CHIS Chair: Linda Knipper,
Linda.Montanaro@gmail.com
518 377-4987

Vice Chairs: Dan and Joanne Maier,
Danjomaier@gmail.com
518 449-8480

Secretary: Virginia Dorwaldt,
vmdorwaldt@gmail.com
518 439-3110

Treasurer: Don Salhoff,
driris2000@hotmail.com
518 439-1484

Newsletter editor: Euthemia Matsoukas,
EuthemiaMatsoukas@gmail.com
518 439-3758

Iris Show Chair: Kathryn Mohr,
kemohrke@aol.com
518 952-4995

Composting Made Easy On Sunday, March 20th

The next meeting of the Capital Hudson Iris Society will be on Sunday, March 20th at 1:30 p.m. at the East Greenbush Library. Our speakers will be Master Gardeners Virginia Dorwaldt and Ronnie Siegel who will give a talk entitled “Composting Made Easy.”

Besides being a founding member of CHIS, Virginia Dorwaldt is a Master Gardener Volunteer with the Albany County Cornell Cooperative Extension and has been since 2010. It was there she met Ronnie Siegel, another volunteer, and they trained together. They have each taken a Master Composing Course, Ronnie through the Schenectady County Extension and Virginia through the Rensselaer County Extension. They are part of the compost team that developed and maintains the Educational Compost Site at the Cornell Cooperative Extension of Albany County in Voorheesville. Their talk will cover the how, what and why of composting, offering several different methods depending on your space and needs.

The East Greenbush Community Library is located on Community Way, off Michaels Road in East Greenbush. From Albany or I-787, take the Patroon Island Bridge to Exit 9 and go south on Route 4 for about a half mile to Route 151 going east, $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way around the traffic circle. Michaels Road is the second right off Route 151. Bring a dessert or snack to share, bring a friend or two, and prepare to enjoy yourself and learn a lot. Coffee and goodies start at 1:30 and the meeting will begin at 2:00. If you have any questions, call Euthemia at 439-3758 or write her an email.

Dwarf Iris Society Needs Assistance

The Dwarf Iris Society is trying to track down photos or slides of past Caparne-Welch Award and Caparne-Welch Medal winners. The Caparne-Welch is the highest award a Miniature Dwarf Bearded iris can win. DIS needs photos of the following iris: **Beauty Spot 1947, April Morn 1952, Sparkling Eyes 1954, Angel Eyes 1959, Atomic Blue 1961, Bumble Wings 1963, Sun Sparkle 1967, Tom Thumb 1973, Nuggets 1976, Penny Candy 1977.** You can send photos to Lyn Wilson irislyn@cox.net or 500 Adair Circle, Hutchinson, KS 67502-2037. They may also be sent to Robert Pries robertpries@embarqmail.com or to him at 107 Brothers Dr. Roxboro NC 27574. DIS is also soliciting donations of Caparne-Welch Award or Medal winners for a DIS fundraiser. The list of Medal winners is on http://www.irises.org/About_Irises/Awards_Surveys/AIS_Awards.html. You can e-mail me: kemohrke@aol.com for a complete list of the Award winners. If you grow any of these irises and would like to donate them you may contact Lyn Wilson or Robert Pries.
- Kathryn Mohr

Linda says...

Hello All,

We had a great **Doldrums Party** with the Hosta and Daylily Societies on Sunday, February 21st at the Albany County Cooperative Extension. There were 70 people in attendance! Not only did we all bring great food for the potluck but our speaker, Rob Handel of the Bees Knees Café in Preston Hollow brought three different samples of his delicious food made from foraged ingredients. I particularly liked the mustard he made from wild garlic mustard – and don't we know where there are fields and fields of it! Attached to this newsletter are recipes he shared with us, one of them the mustard recipe!

Our **next meeting is Sunday, March 20th**, when our own Virginia Dorwaldt and her Master Gardener collaborator, Ronnie Siegel, will talk about composting. It's something I've needed to do for a long time and I'm so pleased they'll be making it easy for us!

Just three weeks later, on **Sunday, April 10th**, Phyllis Rosenblum, another Master Gardener and former Times Union Garden Columnist, will give a talk about Vegetable Gardening. Perfect for spring planting!

We're beginning our preparations for the May 15th Siberian Iris and Perennial Sale at Main Square. On **Saturday, April 16th**, Euthemia will host the "**digging party**" at her house when we all dig up our oversized Siberian clumps (named varieties please) and bring them to her house for a potting party – we'll divide, pot up and label the pots for the May sale. We do it early to enable the plants to develop well in the pots. And with the warm weather this year, it probably won't be too early for our irises to begin popping out of the ground!

Don't forget that the **American Iris Society Convention** will be held in New Jersey and Pennsylvania this May. Many of us are going from Wednesday, May 25 and returning home Sunday morning, May 29. This is a rare opportunity to attend the national convention on the east coast, and very close to us! For detailed information on the convention, and for the registration forms and the full Event Schedule, log onto www.ais2016convention.com. If you don't have internet access, contact Euthemia and she'll get you the forms.

See you on March 20th!

- Linda

Garden and Flower Show

CHIS will be sharing a booth with the Upstate New York Hosta Society and the Hudson Adirondack Daylily Society at the Capital District Garden and Flower Show from March 18-20th at Hudson Valley Community College. The show enables us to meet the gardening public, distribute flyers about upcoming shows and sales, and answer questions about iris gardening that people are sure to ask. If you didn't have an opportunity to sign up at the Doldrums Party, contact Euthemia. There are also a few free passes for volunteers, so let Euthemia know by 3/10 if you want to sign up for a time slot and she'll get you a pass if there are any left.

Just remember, it's really fun to sit and help people with their questions and let them know about our activities. Some of our best new members have come to us through this yearly show!

Doldrums Tasted Good!

This year's Winter Doldrums event was well attended at the Albany County Cooperative Extension facility in Voorheesville. The potluck luncheon was more bountiful and more delectable than ever, and the seemingly endless array of appetizers, entrees and homemade desserts did little to curb the crowd's enthusiastic response to guest speaker.

Rob Handel's program was on setting a gourmet table with food foraged from field and woodland. Rob, master chef at the Bee's Knees café at Heather Ridge Farm in Preston Hollow, guided us in choosing under-utilized herbs, blossoms, seeds, bark and roots and then transforming these foraged freebies in the preparation of some original and truly delicious dishes, beverages and condiments. The highlight of Rob's program was a tasting experience for our seventy attendees featuring wild nettle soup, black locust blossom soda and a pungent grainy mustard made from invasive garlic mustard seeds. Five of his recipes from foraged ingredients are on the following pages!

I'm really looking forward to visiting the Bee's Knees and sampling more of Rob's incredible creations.

– Dan Maier

Siberian Iris Dig on Saturday, April 16th!

Rethinking Wild Edibles – Recipes by Rob Handel

Feb 21 2016

www.robhandel.com ~ rob_handel@yahoo.com

Nettle Soup

Nettles make a wonderful, fresh soup that has just the right balance of rich comfort and bright green flavor for warm spring days with cold nights.

1 tbsp olive oil
1 onion, chopped
1 carrot, diced
1 leek, sliced OR ½ c coarsely chopped ramps or wild chives
1 large floury (Russet) potato diced
1 tsp salt
1qt vegetable or chicken stock
1 lb nettles, washed, leaves picked
4 T butter, diced
1 c cream
¼ tsp nutmeg
Salt and pepper to taste

Heat the oil in a large saucepan over medium heat and add the onion, carrot, leeks, potato, and salt. Cook until the onions are translucent, approximately ten minutes. Add the stock and simmer until the vegetables are soft, another 15-20 minutes. Add the remaining ingredients and simmer briefly to cook the nettles, approximately 5-10 minutes. Puree and season with salt and pepper to taste. Serve with a dollop of sour cream or crème fraîche.

Wild Greens Saag

Saag is a traditional Punjab dish traditionally made with cultivated mustard greens, which makes pungent wild greens such as garlic mustard, wild mustard, and dock a perfect variation. Saag is meant to be scooped up with warm flatbread, but I've found it to be a great compliment to scrambled eggs as well.

½ stick butter
2 tsp cumin seed, ground fresh
1 tsp dried crushed chili pepper
2 cloves garlic, chopped
1 tsp coriander, ground fresh
1 tsp grated fresh ginger
2 Tbsp ground turmeric
1 pound chopped wild greens
1 pound chopped spinach, fresh or frozen
1 tsp salt
½ c cream ½ c yogurt

Melt the butter in a large skillet over medium heat. Add the cumin, chili, garlic, coriander, ginger, and turmeric, and sauté briefly until fragrant, approximately 1 minute. Add the greens, salt, and cream, and simmer until very tender, 15-20 minutes. Remove from heat and stir in the yogurt. Serve with naan or other flatbread.

Chimichurri

Chimichurri is an Argentine herb sauce that's served with grilled meats. The brightness and acidity of the herbs and vinegar are a great foil for the richness of the meat. This "master recipe" can be adapted to a wide variety of herbs and vinegars, or you could substitute citrus juice for the vinegar. It's also good on eggs or rice.

2 cups packed wild or cultivated herbs (ramps, chives, parsley, etc.)
4 medium garlic cloves, peeled (omit if using chives or ramps)
1 teaspoon dried oregano
1/4 cup red wine vinegar
1/2 teaspoon red pepper flakes
1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
Freshly ground black pepper
1 cup extra-virgin olive oil

Add all ingredients to food processor or blender and pulse until the herbs are finely chopped. Sauce can be refrigerated for up to two weeks.

Locust Blossom or Lilac Syrup

Locust blossoms and lilacs both have wonderfully light floral flavors that make the perfect refreshing drink on a warm day. Seeing as their season is so short, making a syrup preserves them for the remainder of the year. This "recipe" is really a technique and can also be used for leafy herbs like mint or catnip.

Black locust blossoms or lilacs
Water
Sugar
Lemon juice

Pick the blossoms from the stems of the locust or lilac clusters. The stem of the cluster imparts an unpleasant vegetal flavor, and should be discarded. Place the blossoms into a pot and cover with water. They will have the tendency to float, so push them down as needed. The water should just cover them. Place on the stove and bring to a simmer, then turn off and cover the pot for 20 minutes. Strain the blossoms from the water and measure the volume. Bring to a boil and add an equal volume of sugar and stir to dissolve. For every gallon of finished syrup add two tablespoons of lemon juice. This syrup will keep for several weeks in the refrigerator, or can be hot water bath canned to make it shelf stable for a year. To use mix to taste with seltzer for a refreshing soda, add to lemonade or iced tea, serve over fruit or ice cream, or use in trifles.

Wild Grainy Mustard

This spicy mustard is a great way to control the spread of invasive garlic mustard. To collect the seeds wait until the seed pods turn brown and brittle, usually in late August. Bend the top of the plant into a clean bucket, and beat it on the sides of the bucket, so that the seed pods fall inside. When you've collected enough, shake the bucket back and forth to encourage the seeds to fall to the bottom and the pods to rise to the top. Skim off the majority of the pods by hand, then winnow the rest by pouring into another bucket set in front of a fan. The fan will blow the chaff (unwanted bits of pod) away and the seeds will fall into the second bucket. This sounds like an arduous task, but I average about a pound of garlic mustard seeds an hour, which makes a great deal of mustard.

1/4 c garlic mustard or wild mustard seeds
1/2 c yellow mustard seeds
1/2 c beer, white wine, or hard cider
1/4 c apple cider or white wine vinegar
3/4 tsp salt
1 T honey or maple

Combine all ingredients and allow to sit 8-12 hours for mustard seeds to absorb liquid. Blend until desired consistency is reached, adding 1T of water if necessary. Allow to "ripen" covered at room temperature for an additional 8-12 hours, then refrigerate.