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CALENDAR

AT A GLANCE

APRIL 10

PRUNING PARTY - Fort Tryon

MAY 2

PRUNING PARTY - The Fells

All members and guests are welcome!

AUG 6-8

2010 NAHS Annual Meeting and Conference Fort Bragg, California

SEPTEMBER 11

2010 Northeast Heather Society Annual Membership Meeting and Conference Lasdon Park Arboretum Katoneh, NY

Calluna Invasive ???

NEHS Questions Fine Gardening Magazine's Sources

Steve Aitken

Editor, Fine Gardening magazine

(copy to: plants@plants.usda.gov)

Dear Steve,

We members of the Northeast Heather Society (a chapter of the North American Heather Society) are always pleased to see our favorite plant featured in a gardening magazine, as it is in your February 2010 issue, page 45.

However, we take issue with the inclusion of heather, *Calluna vulgaris*, in your "Invasive Alert" on page 16. The line reads that it is considered invasive in MA, NC, RI and the reader is advised to "visit www.invasive.org/weedus/index.html for more information".

I did visit that site and its "Invasive Plant Atlas" which does indeed list *Calluna vulgaris* as invasive, although without mention of any specific state.

Elsewhere on the site there is a distribution map for heather which highlights the states of MA, NC and RI.

There are photographs of heather taken in the country of Poland and apparently somewhere in the plains of the United States with a ridge of high mountains on the horizon—obviously not Rhode Island or Massachusetts and I am pretty sure not North Carolina, either.

I could find no text on the site indicating a reason for heather to be included on the Invasive Plant Atlas list.

I then did an internet search of the named states' invasive plant lists looking for *Calluna vulgaris*/heather:

1. "Invasive Species Council Official List of Invasive Plants in Rhode Island"- NO mention
2. "Massachusetts Invasive Plant List"-NO mention
3. "North Carolina Invasive Plant List"- NO mention

Two years ago, you featured heather with the same warning and referral to the invasive plant site as printed in this latest issue. At that time I searched the above named sites with the same results and I did send a letter of inquiry to Rhode Island, which is copied below.

We as a society are perturbed that heather is being portrayed to your readers as invasive with no evidence supporting the claim. And we are scratching our heads because we have all been growing heather throughout eastern New York, all the New England states and into the mid-Atlantic region with never the slightest observation of heather growing rampantly.

While we recognize the need to identify truly aggressive non-native plants and to educate the gardening public of their negative effects on the environment, we strongly feel that *Calluna vulgaris* does not deserve to be included on that list. We hope that you will join with us in correcting the inaccurate portrayal of heather as invasive in Massachusetts, North Carolina and Rhode Island.

Very truly yours,

Judith Doyle

Member of North American Heather Society (www.northamericanheathersoc.org)

Past President of Northeast Heather Society chapter

Past Content Editor *Heather Notes*, NEHS's quarterly newsletter

**Several of my acquaintances had this reaction when I told them of this "Invasive Alert" :
"Invasive? Are you kidding me? I'm lucky it lived through the winter!"**

Fine Gardening Editor's Response

A few days after sending the e-mail to Fine Gardening, Steve Aitken called to tell me that **my letter would be published in the May issue of his magazine**. He had visited the government site and he also was puzzled by their cryptic appellation for heather. Steve admires the plant (lost his though) and would like to call upon our organization for future information on the cultivation of same.

FEATURED HEATHER

Calluna vulgaris 'Fortyniner Gold'

Long racemes of white flowers, Aug-Oct, with lime yellow foliage throughout the year.

Erect open habit. Floriferous. Recommended.

Sport from 'Long White' found by Jim Thompson of Manchester, California, U.S.A. Named in honour of the Californian gold rush of 1849.

Height: 15-18" Width: 18"

Taken From write up in "Handy Guide to Heathers"

Photos taken by Mary Matwey

The specimen is in her Binghamton, NY garden



Budding in August



Blooming in September



Finished Blooming in November

Another Comment on 'Harry's Grace'

by Donald A.M. Mackay

Inspired by Jane Murphy's dedication to her heathers, I went out at once into the snow-covered garden after reading her article on *Calluna vulgaris* 'Harry's Grace'. I had to see if my plant from Bill Dowley's propagation efforts was doing as well as hers. I scraped away the snow and found a healthy green foliage but a paucity of flowers, past, present or future.

The plant has grown outwards rather well and is still very short in height though not really prostrate. There are only occasional old small faded flowers, some with a projecting pistil, but I hesitate to call the flowering typical of a bud-bloomer.

The buds are indeed whitish, but my hand lens show the buds to be leaf buds covered with a whitish felt. The flower bud has yet to show at the end of these very short branchlets. The leaves they carry are very small and very tightly packed in the manner of scales on a pine cone. I'd vote for a multibracteate form rather than a bud-bloomer, but maybe it's both.

I think I will scrape the snow back over the plant and wait for a warm spell before I make my next examination. I don't have Jane's zeal for documentation, at least not in this raw weather.

And an Update on 'Harry's Grace'

by Jane Murphy

Dr. E. Charles Nelson, the Administrator of **The Heather Society**, provided some much needed guidance regarding the registration of Harry's Grace. Namely that it is not necessary to conduct trials before registering a name. It is much more important that the plant which is propagated and distributed should have a formal name. Dr. Nelson has provide a registered number (C.2010.01) for 'Harry's Grace'. I am in the process of completing the registration form and hope to have a status update for the next issue of Heather Notes.

▪ DON'T BE PRUNED! WE WOULD MISS YOU!

Check the expiration date on the address page of this newsletter.

Send your renewal to Treasurer Peter Matwey,
7 Heights Court, Binghamton, NY 13905

Heathers and Sand

by Donald A.M. Mackay

À propos of the suitability of sand as the ideal soil for heathers, it is instructive to review the several pages devoted to heathers in **Gardening on Sandy Soil in North Temperate Areas**. Written by Christine Kelway, and published by Dover Publications, NYC in 1965 (reprinted in 1975), it has aged gracefully and is still very well worth study. The obvious points of the benefits of peat and humus addition and the avoidance of chalk or calcite in the sand are suitably made in the section on soil preparation for azaleas and rhododendrons, and repeated to a degree in the section on heathers. Writing from Cornwall, she notes that in Britain there are large areas of inland highly acid sands and also coastal alkaline sands, and that acidity is the key for successful growth on sand.

Alas, she says nothing about the danger of adding sand to form concrete in a clayey soil, and fails to emphasize that beach or shore sand (the basis for many American sandy gardens) is very calcium-rich if the sand contains (as it usually does) a large proportion of pulverized sea shells. Perhaps for this reason she rates the ericas so highly in her book, since some are lime tolerant, but probably this is mainly on account of the very long bloom period encompassed by the various erica species.

If you grow on sandy soil her list of recommended ericas (including tree heaths and brooms and gorse) could be very interesting. She says comparatively little about callunas except to heap praise on *Calluna vulgaris* 'H.E. Beale', 'C.W. Nix', 'Flore Plano', 'Gold Haze', 'Serlei', 'Rosalind' and especially 'Robert Chapman'. Her last sentence is worth noting. "Such a garden of gorse, broom and heather would satisfy even the collector's appetite, giving a prolonged season of bloom for the minimum of effort, since plants never do as well as on a soil they love" (emphasis mine).

However, this book was written by someone living in Cornwall, the sunniest place in England, so her definition of "north temperate areas" is rather different from ours. In addition, sandy gardens in America tend to be coastal gardens, although of course we have our own acid sands in the Pine Barrens of New Jersey and Albany, NY, and inland Long Island where the acid sterile soil dwarfs pines and oaks and favors the *Ericaceae*. So read the foreword carefully where these transatlantic references are noted.

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Annual Membership Listing

The annual list of NEHS membership which includes name, address and email will be included in the July issue of Heather Notes.

DETAILS OF COMING EVENTS - From page 1 Calendar

APRIL 10
 Rain Date: April 17
Heather Pruning Party 10:00 a.m.
Fort Tryon New York City, New York

Our gang gathers in the heather garden equipped with kneeling pads, gloves, favorite pruning tools, cameras, bag lunches, and great pleasure in meeting old friends, human and plant, in the first burst of spring.

Riverside Drive to Broadway/West 192nd to Dyckman Streets. Cabrini Boulevard @ Fort Washington Avenue, NY, NY 10040 ny-cgovparks.org

MAY 2
 Rain date: May 8
Heather Pruning Party 10:00 a.m.
Board of Directors Meeting
The Fells
 Newbury, NH 03255
 603-763-4789; www.thefells.org

The usual reminder: bring your garden tools of choice and your lunch. Good idea to dress in layers because we always start out quite chilly on the hillside above Lake Sunapee, warming considerably by lunchtime on the stone terrace of the gatehouse. The board of directors meeting takes place during lunch.

Everyone is welcome.

August 5th - 8th.
2010 NAHS Annual Meeting and Conference
Fort Bragg, California

The Mendocino Coast Heather Society (MCHS), a chapter of the North American Heather Society (NAHS), welcomes members to the 2010 NAHS Annual meeting and conference to be held in Fort Bragg, California.

Friday, August 6: Registration, garden tours, dinner and lecture

Saturday August 7: Breakfast, garden tours, BBQ and Annual Membership Meeting

Sunday, August 8: Brunch, nursery visit, garden tours and Conclusion

Details of the projected program, maps, and descriptions of tour gardens will be available in the Registration Package. Contact NAHS/MCHS President at abreu@mcn.org regarding conference inquiries.

September 11, 2010
Northeast Heather Society
Annual Membership Meeting and Conference

Mark it on your calendar!

On Saturday, September 11, 2010 the NEHS will hold their conference at Lasdon Park Arboretum in Katoneh, NY. Tentative plans include a garden tour with emphasis on rock gardening in the morning, lunch and Annual Membership Meeting in Lasdon's conference room facility and we will complete the day with a heather planting party. The heather planting will be at the site of Lasdon's old rock garden where we have previously planted a heather bed in 2008. This year we will extend that heather bed throughout the remainder of the old rock garden leaving the rocks in place and planting around them. If you've never had the opportunity of planting heather in an old rock garden this promises to be a unique learning experience. Plans are in the works to have the pockets of soil around the rocks amended and ready for planting the heather.

For those traveling from afar, a recommended list of overnight accommodations will be forth coming in the July issue along with a firm schedule of event times and locations and cost.

This may be a low key event but often these turn out to be the "best ever" as we renew friendships and hopefully make new friends.

Heather Bits

A New Use for Ornamental Grasses

If you don't have a handy supply of evergreen boughs to use as a winter covering for your heathers next year try using the top half of your dried ornamental grass that includes the inflorescences. When these are strewn over the heathers they knit nicely together and catch and hold any snow that comes your way. It helps if it rains after you distribute them on the heather bed to mat them down and keep them from blowing away. Some might say that I'm crazy because I'll end up with a huge cleanup job come spring with lots of Miscanthus volunteers but having grown several species and cultivars of Miscanthus I've yet to find a volunteer anywhere. I'm willing to take the risk and will let you know the results. I loathe turning my few evergreens into telephone poles and the holiday boughs are never enough.

Hot Mulch

Your new Heathers are in the ground, the perennials are popping up and it's time to mulch. But, your bulk mulch is warm, maybe even hot to the touch. You are concerned that it will burn, or even fry these new plants, yet you want to get the mulching done. Try this. Invert your 3-gallon and five gallon buckets or plastic pots over these new and emerging plants. Shovel your mulch over this area. Then, carefully lift the buckets and pots. The mulch will ring the plant, but it is not so close that it will burn the plant. After the mulch has cooled (maybe 5 to 7 days), you can rake the mulch closer to the plant.

Central NY Gardeners

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Editor's Notes

By Mary Matwey mmatwey@stny.rr.com

The longer we survive the more life events repeat themselves. Once again the Northeast Heather Society finds itself faced with a new Editor for its newsletter. I believe all societies tend to work their editors hard so it is a tribute to the writing, investigation and organizational skills of our previous editor, Judy Doyle, that she lasted 6 years in the editor "hot seat" of the Heather Notes. She put together, single-handedly, Volumes 14 through 19, 24 issues in total plus Vol. 20-1, the first issue of the 2010. When we are not in the "hot seat", we all fantasize about "How things should be done" or "Wouldn't it be better if...". As the new Editor of the HN, I've had to eat those words already as I learned an important lesson and that is "My priorities are not necessarily anybody else's". So you will have to settle for a description of some new features soon to be viewed in the Heather Notes.

First: All current NEHS members have a life beyond the heather bed or if they are fortunate enough, their greatest accomplishment may include heather. This is a unique opportunity to blow your own horn for your hobbies and crafts or plug your favorite charity or volunteer organization. You may even request anonymity when your article is published in the HN as long as your active membership can be verified. Pictures of your interests would be great.

The next issue will feature an active NEHS member who took up wood working and is making some beautiful pieces of art. Her heathers are also doing well now that she is ignoring them. If you are interested in participating, drop the editor an email and we'll send you a form to fill out with the particulars. This feature will be called:

"Life with/after Heathers"

Second: In the last HN issue Vol. 20-1, I mistakenly gave credit to Donald Mackay (forgive me Donald) as being one of the founders of the Northeast Heather Society. This was incorrect and brought to my attention by one of the first three members of the non-official "Eastern Heather" group. Being the history buff I am, I was absolutely thrilled that this person felt strongly enough to send this "young upstart in the NEHS" a letter setting the facts straight. While apologizing for my lack of literary investigation, I boldly asked her to consider writing a "NEHS Heritage" column featuring year by year historical accounts of "who we were", "where we've been" and "what we did". Much to my amazement she agreed! Watch the next issue for:

"NEHS Heritage" by Greta Waterman.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Brian J. Prosser
Greenwich, CT

From The President

"Volunteers don't necessarily have the time,
but they have the heart."

Happy Spring Everyone,

I heard a Robin singing in my maple tree late last evening. Although I doubt he slept in that tree, there was a Robin singing early this morning in the same tree on the same branch. Same Robin? I'll assume it was the same Robin and draw a correlation between him and my theme for this column. "Sameness" is good in the Robin's case as it indicates he will stick around for the whole season but "sameness" gets a little discouraging when your society looks to fill Officer and Board of Director positions from the same

reservoir of active members. Your society needs you. Perhaps it would help if I listed the pluses that come with being an active member in your society: new friends, great camaraderie, new places to visit, great experiences in planting/trimming heather, sharing knowledge with heather experts, new contacts and sources of reasonably priced heathers, heather propagation tips, great meetings and conferences, finding talents you've forgotten you had and the list goes on and on. Since the demography of the society's membership has shifted inland and south within the Northeast US area our meeting locations and supported heather gardens have shifted in like manner; Fort Tryon (NYC), Lasdon Park Arboretum (Westchester Co. NY), The Fells in Newbury, NH and 3 small public heather gardens in Binghamton, NY. The only negative aspect of stepping up to be more active is: no matter where the society meets there is always some officer or board member who will have traveled afar to participate. 100% attendance is not a requirement nor is prior experience in holding an office. With the wonder of the computer, **quality not quantity** is important for our active members. Please consider the following positions :

Office	Term
President	2010-2012 (2 yr)
Vice President	2010-2012 (2 yr)
Secretary	2010-2011 (1 yr) *
Treasurer	2010-2011 (1 yr) *
Corresponding Secretary	2010-2011 (1 yr) *
Board of Director - 5 Positions	2010-2011 (1 yr)*
Board of Director - 4 Positions	2010-2012 (2yr)

*Reflects a revision to the NEHS Bylaws to remedy the current situation where all governing positions of the society terms of office expire in the same year.

I would love to hear from you even if it is say that you cannot possibly find the time to become more active in your society.

Included in this newsletter is the revised NEHS Bylaws as voted on and approved by the general membership present at the Annual Membership meeting in August 2009. Changes were made to verbiage in Articles VI, VII, VIII, IX, XI and additional sections, D, E, F, were added to Article XI.

The general membership also approved a motion to establish a family membership to permit more than one family member to vote and participate in all NEHS activities for an additional \$5 per year fee above the annual dues. The family membership includes all household members residing at the same address and each member has one vote. Each household will receive only one copy of the Heather Notes.

Regards,
Mary Matwey

Heather Debuts at the 2010 Philadelphia International Flower Show

by Jane Murphy

It started with a phone call in October 2009. A friendly voice identified herself as Joan Schmidt, a member of the Delaware Valley Chapter of the North American Rock Garden Society (DVC-NARGS). She had visited our website (www.hickoryhillheathandheather.com) and thought DVC-NARGS might want to use heather in their exhibit at the 2010 Philadelphia International Flower Show (PIFS). She had many questions about the size of the plants, when they bloomed, and foliage color. When I told her that many of the heaths were at their peak bloom in February- March, she was very intrigued. DVC-NARGS has always had a limited budget for their PIFS exhibit; certainly not enough money to purchase plants forced into bloom. We arranged a date for DVC-NARGS members to visit our nursery so that they could see the plants.

Several weeks later, Joan and Gene Spurgeon, the designer of the DVC-NARGS exhibit, visited our nursery. After a tour, we spent most of the time discussing the various attributes of winter interest heaths and heathers. Joan and Gene selected 5 different cultivars for the exhibit.

Calluna vulgaris 'Beoley Gold'
Calluna vulgaris 'Bonfire Brilliance'
Calluna vulgaris 'Blazeaway'
Erica carnea 'Pirbright Rose'
Erica carnea 'Isabell'

Joan and Gene invited us to attend the next DVC-NARGS meeting so that we could meet other members in the society and learn more about the exhibit. We attended our first DVC-NARGS meeting at the Jenkins Arboretum, Devon, PA in November 2009. The program included a presentation by Gene, describing the theme and plans for the DEV-NARGS exhibit at the Flower Show. Our reaction was 'WOW - This is a huge undertaking!'

DVC-NARGS chose the theme, 'A Traveler's Rockery', to complement the PHIS theme of 'Passport To The World'. The intent was to evoke, with a contemporary sensibility, the playful rockery of an acquisitive Victorian garden. The plans for the exhibit called for plant materials from around the world presented in an irregular format composed of scree, rectangular containers, and raised beds with a liberal supply of artfully constructed fake rocks. Visitors would be able to circulate completely around and through the 20 ft. by 30' ft. exhibit.

Fortunately, the plants reserved for the DVC-NARGS prospered throughout the winter in our greenhouse. By mid-February the Ericas were in full bloom, and the foliage of the Callunas, 'Bonfire Brilliance' and 'Blazeaway', was a striking red-orange. Since the Flower Show opened on February 27th, we agreed to deliver the heathers on Thursday, Feb 25th. After a

bit of sprucing up, the plants were ready. When we arrived at the Philadelphia Convention Center, a rather nasty loading dock supervisor told us in no uncertain terms that we 'could not unload at his dock or he'd have us arrested!' Paul said that he'd move on, once he found a spot to turn the car around. Once we were out of the supervisor's sight, Paul stopped the car, I hopped out, and quickly unloaded the six trays of plants. Paul then drove on, with the supervisor none the wiser.

The activity inside the Convention Center was mind-boggling. People were hustling all around -painting backdrops, sawing wood, moving plant materials, shoveling dirt. Fork trucks were scooting all over. Everywhere there were plants, and piles of dirt and stones. It was hard to imagine that the exhibits would be ready in just two days.

The thirteen containers/troughs/raised beds, which comprised the DVC-NARGS exhibit, were in place and filled with peat, when we arrived. Members had been hard at work on the construction since Monday. The 'rockery' in the exhibit was amazing! It was hard to believe that none of it was real. The stone containers, and individual rocks had all been constructed from styrofoam fish boxes, while the stone trough was made from hypertufa. Most of the plants had been delivered Thursday morning, so the next step was prepping the plants and placing them in the appropriate containers. The plant list, which mapped plants to specific containers, simplified distributing the plant material to the right container. DVC-NARGS members made quick work of finding the right 'home' for the plants. Arranging the plants in the containers was more of a challenge, but NARGS-DVC members jumped right in. They arranged, (and often re-arranged) the plants to provide the most impact. Those members with an 'eye for design' really helped to ensure that each individual container was a unique display by itself, yet fit into the overall design of the exhibit. When Paul and I left that afternoon nearly all of the containers were filled with plants. It was obvious that the exhibit was going to be quite an attraction.

Judging of the exhibits took place on Saturday morning, prior to the opening of the show at noontime. **We found out on Sunday that the DVC-NARGS exhibit won Best in Show for a Garden Society.** We were very excited that heather contributed to 'The Making of a Winner'! On Tuesday, we visited the Flower show and saw the finished DVC-NARGS exhibit. It was magnificent.

This has been a great experience for us. We hope that more people become aware of the beauty and versatility of heather as a result of seeing it in the Delaware Valley Chapter of the North American Rock Garden Society at the 2010 Philadelphia International Flower Show.

The Delaware Valley Chapter of the North American Rock Garden Society Exhibit
at the 2010 Philadelphia International Flower Show - Photos by Jane Murphy



HEATHER NOTES, all rights reserved, is published quarterly by the Northeast Heather Society (NEHS), a tax-exempt organization and a chapter of the North American Heather Society (NAHS).

The purpose of the Northeast Heather Society is to foster interest in growing heathers (Calluna, Erica, Daboecia, Cassiope, Phyllodoce and Andromeda) in northeastern North America, by serving as a conduit of educational information for both the experienced and the novice gardener.

MEMBERSHIP in the Northeast Heather Society is open to anyone who pays dues to this chapter. Membership benefits include: a subscription to this quarterly newsletter, participation in chapter meetings and elections, borrowing privileges for slide/power point presentations, and, most valuable of all, contact with fellow heather gardeners who mostly live in or near your growing zone, all willing to share helpful advice and their experiences. A family membership permits more than one family member to vote and participate in all NEHS activities for an additional \$5 per year fee above the annual dues. The family membership includes all household members residing at the same address and each member has one vote. Each household will receive only one copy of Heather Notes.

Dues for an Individual: \$15 a year; \$28 for a two year membership; \$40 for a three year membership

Dues for a Family \$20 a year; \$33 for a two year membership; \$45 for a three year membership

Remit payment to: Peter Matwey, Treasurer, 7 Heights Court, Binghamton, NY 13905

HEATHER CULTURE PROGRAMS are available. For slides, contact: Harry Bowen, Falmouth, MA. Tel (508) 548 3113.

For digital presentations, contact Bill Dowley, Keene, NH. Tel. (603) 355-8801; wdowley@ne.rr.com

WEB INFORMATION: North American Heather Society website: www.northamericanheathersoc.org

Click on 'Chapters' to find the Northeast Heather Society (NEHS) chapter page.

ADVERTISING: Quarter page ad: \$35 per issue; \$25 per issue if advertising in two or more consecutive issues.

Contact: Pat Hoffman (856) 467-4711; njgardener15@hotmail.com

BE A CONTRIBUTOR TO HEATHER NOTES:

Do you have a suggestion, a question, a story, an anecdote, a poem, or a photo to share? Contact the Content editor:

Mary Matwey, 7 Heights Court, Binghamton, NY 13905 (607) 723 1418 mmatwey@stny.rr.com

All material may be edited for clarity and length.

DEADLINES FOR EACH ISSUE:

March 20—June 20—September 20—December 20

