



Potomac Valley Chapter  
North American  
ROCK GARDEN SOCIETY

PVC Bulletin  
June 2021

Wollam's Flower Farm, Jeffersonston, Virginia Photo by S. Strickler

PVC web page: <https://nargs.org/chapter/potomac-valley-chapter>

## 2021 Calendar of Events

**All meetings are Saturdays except where noted.**

**June 12, 1 to 4pm, Open Garden at member Taffy Turner's, 10207 Lorain Ave, Silver Spring, MD 20901 (We are invited along with the Potomac Hosta Society) From Taffy:** I've been here for 30 years, seriously gardening for about 20. One of the few things growing in the garden



photo by T. Turner

when we moved in, besides the big trees and large shrubs, was a clump of unknown Hosta I called 'Big Green'. I later identified it as *H. fortunei*. I started dividing it to fill in lots of empty spaces. This got me interested in Hostas and I eventually ended up with over 200 different varieties and cultivars. Alas, I have not been as diligent in watering as instructed by the Hosta Gurus, so I'm down to about 170 now. ("To grow Hostas well one must water, water, water!") But I do have a lot of other, mostly shade tolerant, plants in the garden that I think are a lot more interesting than Hostas. (Don't tell PHS I said that!!)

I collect kitties as well – 2 live ones and about a dozen stone, marble and metal ones, along with countless turtles, frogs, birds, bunnies and other miscellaneous garden accoutrements such as bird baths, gazing globes, and watering cans. I'm an admitted junkie of estate sales, where I have found many of these treasures.

**July 24, Garden Tour: 10am** Oldmeadow, Garden of Marianne & Michael Willburn, **11291 Dutchmans Creek Rd, Lovettsville, VA 20180** (A little more than an hour from Washington, DC)

Many of you enjoyed Marianne's March Zoom talk based on her newly released book: ***Tropical Plants and How to Love Them--Building a Relationship with Heat-Loving Plants When You Don't Live in the Tropics***. Now we get to see in person how her plant relationships are

working out in her garden.



Photo by M. Willburn

Marianne has been gardening intensively on ten acres in rural Virginia since 2013. Her property includes a stream valley and seven acres of woodland surrounding a clearing of gardens and lawns near the house and barn. We will see gardens established from scratch at Oldmeadow -- a strategically placed woodland walk along a creek, a sunny mixed border by the barn, and shade gardens by the house. Her vegetable and

cutting garden is under renovation in preparation for a greenhouse installation. With her husband Michael, Marianne has also created numerous garden structures--pergolas, a pavilion, homes for chickens and ducks, as well as more whimsical features like a bottle tree and woodland nesting circles inspired by ones at the Delaware Botanic Garden.

By the third week of July, the many tropicals Marianne loves to use for their relatively fast, long-lasting, and lush effect should be strutting their stuff amidst more traditional plantings. You can learn more about Marianne and her garden here: <https://smalltowngardener.com/>

#### **Lunch options:**

- Creek's Edge winery, <https://creeksedgewinery.com/>. Check website regarding reservations (if necessary) and current Covid restrictions.
- Bring a bag lunch and eat in Marianne's garden

**Nearby nursery** Marianne recommends: <https://abernethyspencer.com/growing>

**September 25, Fall Plant Sale**, Greenspring Gardens, Alexandria, VA  
Think about potting up plants for this fall sale.

**October 2, Plant Exchange, 10am**, at home of Ed Aldrich, 7820 Yorktown Dr., Alexandria, VA 22308

## **President's Message from Barbara Rose**

Dear PVC Members,

Seeing people in person at our plant exchange has made me happy. I hope it has you too. A big thank you from us all to Dick and Freddi Hammerschlag for hosting the exuberant exchange and to Jim Hughes for sponsoring the silent auction of his beautifully planted hypertufa trough.

We have a developing schedule ahead of in-person garden visits, the Fall plant sale, the Fall plant exchange, as well as workshops on creating hypertufa troughs and seed germination.

One of the major activities our chapter participates in is the NARGS seed exchange. During the next few months, NARGS members the world over will carefully gather seeds from the plants in their gardens and from plants in the wild. These dedicated seed collectors donate their seeds to NARGS for the big exchange. For the last few years our chapter has contributed to the exchange by sorting literally hundreds of seed taxa so that they can be ready for the exchange. Thanks to Kevin McIntosh, we even sorted seed during the pandemic in our respective homes, located all around the beltway.

We place an emphasis on starting plants from seed in PVC because that is where we get the special rock garden plants we love so much. I'm hoping this year more of us will jump into the process, collecting seed and/or growing plants from seed, all to share at our plant exchange. Members can participate in any of these steps from seed to plant. The major steps being seed collecting, seed sorting, selecting seeds from the exchange, germinating seeds, and finally successfully growing a seedling to a mature plant. We hope to offer a workshop soon that teaches details of seed germination like stratification and scarification, making us more successful at seed germination.

Other members that have gone above and beyond with their recent activities and contributions are Judy Zatsick for her oversight of the Green Spring Rock Garden rejuvenation. Also, thank you to Dick Hammerschlag for obtaining and planting new conifers in the GS rock garden. Finally, I'd like to congratulate Sarah Strickler and John Willis for their recent election to the NARGS Board.

Hope to see you all in person soon and Happy Gardening,

Barbara

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## **TWO TROUGHS**

**Jim Hughes**

As many of you know, I purchased 2 rather large troughs last year. I purposely did not immediately plant them. Instead, I gave myself the enjoyment of imagining different arrangements and combinations in my head and on paper. It was an entertaining pastime during

the early days of Covid. I decided I would take 2020 to imagine the 2 troughs and plant them in spring 2021.

I established a few guidelines before starting my list of plants. First, they should be small, hopefully six to eight inches (flower spikes could be taller). Smaller plants would translate into more plants! Second, they should bloom at different times of the year. Third, their foliage



and character should vary. I did not want 25 bun plants (as much as I like buns). Fourth, they should be relatively well-behaved (no self-seeders or aggressive runners).

While I was compiling potential candidates from my current garden, I visited my favorite rock garden internet sources. By January 2021 I was ready to place orders. Because of the location of the two troughs, one would be for shade lovers 44" x 17" x

11" and the other 59" x 18" x 13" for sun lovers (full sun from 9 to 3).

I also needed to select rocks for these troughs. I raided the rock garden area I developed about 3 years ago for a few (I plan to rework that area anyway). I also had some feather rock that looked like it would be good for the shade trough. I played with different arrangements of the stones in the empty troughs on sunny days in late winter.



Lastly, I decided that my soil mix would be medium sized Akadama (a granular, hard clay used in bonsai mixes), a similar sized pumice, and lava rock. I had all the ingredients on hand since my bonsai club orders them bulk from a wholesale source on the west coast. We get several pallets. These ingredients would ensure excellent drainage and ample oxygen for healthy root systems. The Akadama is also a good nutritional source and holds moisture. All

ingredients were sifted to remove dust and small particles prior to mixing them in a 1:1:1 ratio. I also added a sprinkle of horticultural charcoal which retains moisture and oxygen, encourages drainage, absorbs harmful impurities, and has beneficial nutrients. The last ingredient was a dash of Espoma Soil Perfector for extra drainage.

The following are my plant lists for the two troughs. Come to the member meeting this fall to see the pictures from this coming summer as the troughs bloom and start to fill in.

### Inventory of shade trough plants:

1. *Asarum faurien*
2. *Erythronium americana* – Trout Lily – 4"
3. *Chiastophyllum oppositifolium* - aka *Umbilicus oppositifolius* 6" yellow
4. *Adiantum aleuticum* var. 'Subpumulum' 6" from Vancouver Island via Far Reaches

5. *Arabis caucasia* 'Variegata' 3" - Sequim Rare Plants - white
6. *Dactylorhiza* hybrid 16" - Far Reaches
7. *Ramonda myconi* 'Pink' – Wrightman Alpine Nursery
8. *Hepatica nobilis* var. *japonica* – Far Reaches - white flower/read anthers
9. *Hepatica acutiloba* 'Monroe Shocks' – Plant Delights
10. *Hosta* dwarf
11. *Bergenia* 'Flirt' 6" pink from FONA plant sale
12. *Haberlea* sp. 'Case' – Wrightman Alpines Nursery
13. *Dactylorhiza fuchsii* (Spotted March Orchid) – Moist – Add lime – Keeping It Green Nursery
14. *Soldanella carpatica* 'Alba' – 3" white from Far Reaches
15. *Lepisorus* sp. MD06-256 18" Asian fern – epiphyte on moss on rock - Far Reaches
16. *Dactylorhiza fuchsii* – Keeping It Green Nursery
17. *Erythronium Americana* – Trout Lily – 4"
18. *Asplenium trichomanes* 6" fern
19. *Disporopsis jinfushanensis* from Far Reaches – 2"
20. *Heuchera* 'Constance' – Wrightman Alpine Nursery
21. *Ramonda nathaliae* 'Alba' – Wrightman Alpine Nursery
22. *Erythronium Americana* – Trout Lily – 4"
23. *Cyclamen coum* – 3"

#### Inventory of sun trough plants:

1. *Armeria juniperifolia* 3" pink slow grower - Putnam Hill
2. *Arabis caucasia* 'Variegata' 3" white - Sequim Rare Plants
3. Plant from Young Choe on rock
4. *Allium* 'Millenium' for contrast of foliage and fall bloom
5. *Armeria maritima* 'Little Penny' 3" - Far Reaches
6. *Juniperus communis* (Magowan form)
7. *Sedum* ?? rupestre from Kevin McIntosh
8. *Thuja occidentalis* 'Primo'
9. *Helichrysum* sp. aff. *pagophilum* – Wrightman Alpine Nursery
10. *Draba* aff. *Bryoides* 'Crevice Pygmy' – Wrightman Alpine Nursery
11. *Cheilanthes lanosa* 'Might Tidy' 6" fern - Plant Delights zone 5
12. *Stachys minima* (Dwarf Betony) 4" purple - Putnam Hill
13. *Chiastophyllum oppositifolium* - aka *Umbilicus oppositifolius* 6" yellow
14. *Gentiana acaulis* 5" blue
15. *Cheilanthes lanosa* 'Might Tidy' 6" fern - Plant Delights zone 5
16. *Sedum* 'Lime Twister' 4" - Plant Delights
17. *Viola chaerophylloides* 'Benizuru' 3" burgundy red
18. *Orostachys* 'Jade Mt.' – Wrightman Alpine Nursery
19. *Barnardia japonica* syn. *Scilla scillioides* 15" bulbs - Far Reaches
20. *Soldanella carpatica* 'Alba' 3" white - Far Reaches
21. *Draba ventosa* – Wrightman Alpine Nursery
22. *Potentilla dickinsii* 'Nana' 2" yellow
23. *Pulsatilla vernalis* 4"
24. *Silene alpestris* 'Flore Pleno' 6" white - Far Reaches
25. *Mertensia maritima* 6" - Far Reaches
26. *Ipheion uniflorum* 'Albert Castillo' 6" white - Brent and Becky's

# Tributes to Jim McKenney and Alma Kasulaitis

compiled by Kevin McIntosh

As everyone knows by now, two of our chapter members passed away early this year. Jim McKenney and Alma Kasulaitis were esteemed members of PVC and they will be sorely missed. I have taken the liberty of posting 3 obituaries I ran across, which give a nice summary of their lives. This is followed by recollections from chapter members who responded to my email requesting such a few months ago. Many thanks to all of you who contributed!

*Kevin*

## **From Sally Bourrie, Maxine Kent and Chris Herbstritt (written for the Pacific Bulb Society): Jim McKenney: A generous, plant-filled life**

Jim McKenney died of COVID-19 complications on January 29, 2021, at age 77. As his sister, Maxine Kent, explains, “He had a variety of jobs throughout his life, but his career was really his garden.”

Jim graduated from the University of Maryland with a bachelor’s degree in Zoology, which was no surprise to his family. He’d always loved animals and the family home was filled with Jim’s pets, including a monkey, snakes, tegu and monitor lizards, an iguana, a boa constrictor, a Gila monster, and many more – including such pedestrian pets as a dog. Jim’s career at UMD displayed another trademark of his life: a passion for learning. He spent more than four years at UMD earning his degree because he took many additional horticulture classes as well as Sanskrit and German.

After graduating from college, Jim was drafted into the military. He was against the Vietnam War, but he proudly served the country as an army medic – stateside deferred due to his vision deficit.

Jim gardened at his family’s home on a quarter-acre plot in Rockville, MD, but eventually that was not enough space and he expanded into a sunny community garden plot. While Jim did have some areas of special interest – lilies and bulbs, for instance – his knowledge was encyclopedic and his desire to know more, was never-ending. His brilliant mind was equal to his thirst for knowledge.

One of his close friends in Maryland, Chris Herbstritt, whose own love of plants allowed them to share not only the passion for plants but a sophisticated understanding of them, spoke of a visit to Jim’s garden, “chock full of unusual frits, Alliums, heirloom roses, irises, and lilies,” all well-grown and thriving. “The one plant that sticks in my mind,” writes Chris, “was a particularly nice form of red flowered *Lilium canadense*. They are often orange-red, but the form he grew was brick red. It was so vigorous and well grown! Truly a sight to behold... He also grew a *Welwitschia mirabilis* from seed. Few botanical gardens even attempt to grow this plant. He grew it in a long cylindrical chimney pipe, because it had a long tap root. In case you didn't know, this is a rare monotypic gymnosperm from the Namib desert. I believe that its closest relative is *Ephedra*.”

Jim had an extensive botanical library, yet he said, “There are more important things in life than books.” And that attitude is equally a hallmark of his life. He was known for his gentleness, kindness and generosity that all shown as brightly as his sharp mind and extensive botanical knowledge. After his death, international testimonials uniformly described his sharing spirit, from his vast and highly specialized knowledge of botany to sharing plant samples and welcomes offered to those in the Washington, DC, metro area.

His regular articles and comments for the Pacific Bulb Society have been appreciated by all readers. Jim also spearheaded and wrote numerous articles for the Potomac Valley Chapter of the North American Rock Garden Society. His insights and photographs will be a valuable reference for current and future gardeners.

Jim's blog, "My Virtual Maryland Garden," which he began in 2007, can be found at: [My Virtual Maryland Garden](#). The site includes "Jim and his dog," along with his self-described "Jim's favorite things." You can also find Jim on YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/user/4caeruleus>. Jim was preceded in death by his husband, Wayne Crist, with whom he shared 47 years. Jim will be buried with Wayne at the family plot in Bridgewater, Virginia.

### **Alma Kasulaitis Obituary**

Alma M. Kasulaitis, born August 15, 1939 in Washington, D.C. Daughter of Albin J. and Mary A. Kasulaitis. Oldest sister of Jerome M. Kasulaitis, William J. Kasulaitis (deceased), Donald J. Kasulaitis (deceased), Albin J. Kasulaitis, Jr., and Bernard J. Kasulaitis. Alma graduated from an all-girls high school, Immaculate Conception Academy, D.C. in 1957. She attended the



American Institute of Banking, Northern Virginia Community College.

Alma worked in banking for 36 years, retiring from First American Bank as Assistant Vice President and Branch Manager of the Falls Church Office. Before it became First American Bank, it was known as the Alma Shop, a woman's clothing store, which she passed by every day on the way to school. Alma was awarded "Pillar of the Community" by City of Falls Church Chamber of Commerce in 1991.

She spent much of her time volunteering; as a patient care giver for over 20 years at the American Cancer Society, as Coordinator of ACS's Look Good Feel Better program at Virginia Hospital Center, and as a patient care giver for over 20 years at Capital Caring (hospice).

She served on the Board of Directors at Hillwood Square Mutual Association, Falls Church Chamber of Commerce, Falls Church Garden Club as President, Prime Time Single Catholics, Potomac Hosta Society, and The Jefferson Homeowners Association. She was elected Chairman of Potomac Pedalers Touring Club, one of the largest bicycle clubs in the U.S., with 3,500 members. Alma had a life-long love of horses. She owned, trained and showed horses, as well as taught horseback riding. Since her childhood, Alma had a love of plants. She belonged to ten different garden clubs and was a Master Gardener for over 25 years with Fairfax County Master Gardeners, designed to teach Master Gardeners how to help people with gardening questions. Her love of nature also led her to be an avid birder. Impelled by her love for the arts, Alma also volunteered as an usher at nine different theaters. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Capital Caring (hospice). Due to the pandemic, services will be virtual. For more information, please contact the family.

#### **From Linda Keenan:**

I am awfully sorry to hear this news. What a rough time for him. Jim, his garden and his editing of the PVC NARGS newsletter were great inspirations to me. I always enjoyed talking to him. I hadn't seen Jim in a long time, but we and the world will be much poorer without him. I'm also sorry to hear the news about Alma Kasulaitis. She was such a nice person.

**From Sharon Washburn:**



I'm not sure when I first met Jim, but I do remember after several meetings trying to figure out who this man was who asked such pertinent questions and who also supplied cogent information. I learned that Jim could probably answer any plant question I had and other interesting topics as well. His ability to follow plant names and histories was impressive. And as someone who does not use/know Latin names, he never made me feel less of a gardener for it, only gave me the common name if requested.

He had a good idea for details in a garden, not just appreciating a large, beautiful garden but looking at the close details of a garden tucked into the roots of a tree or several lovely plants pulled together in a vignette.

I so enjoyed getting to know him and reaching the point where he let me in to his personal life as we spent some time working together with Wayne at the FONA plant sale. You could just see the joy those two had with each other and see that Wayne so appreciated Jim's joy and interest in plants.

He brought me some tree peony blooms, and shared how he figured out how to extend their bloom inside the house. He had a wonderful scientific mind, and applied it to so many plant species. And I loved reading his articles in our newsletter.

Jim was generous with his time and knowledge of plants and was always eager to learn more. And he was a kind and gracious man. I will miss him.

**From Maxine Kent (Jim's Sister):**

So nice to hear all the wonderful tributes to my beloved brother Jim. He was my only sibling and we have been very close our entire lives. If two people could be more opposite, it was us, but we maintained our closeness regardless. When I was listening to The Rolling Stones he was listening to Joan Sutherland! My husband always says he was the smartest person, he's ever met!!-

Jim always loved animals. I grew up with Jim's pets--a monkey, snakes, a tegu lizard, a monitor lizard, an iguana, a boa constrictor, a Gila monster (seriously!) and many more just to mention a few. We shared the dog!! He graduated from the University of Maryland with a Zoology degree...but it took him longer than four years because he took so many horticulture classes and Sanskrit and German. He was drafted soon after graduation (the Vietnam war) and became a medic in the army. He was stateside deferred because of his poor vision. He didn't agree with the war but served his country with pride.

He had a variety of jobs throughout his life, the last at Thompson Financial from which he retired. His career was really his garden. His house in Rockville, Md. has a quarter acre lot which he crammed with all kind of plants. The house is full of his love of gardening.

I will miss him terribly! He was just such a wonderful person. I was so lucky to have his as my brother!!

**From Sarah Strickler:**

I first met Jim when I attended the PVC winter study weekend in Reston. That must have been in 2009. He was working the plant sales table, and, with his encouragement, I bought some Asphodeline, which I soon killed. I became program chair and he was newsletter editor so I would see him regularly at board meetings.

Jim loved to tell stories about various subjects -- horticulture, food, music. I remember the meeting where Edith Eddleman spoke about Elizabeth Lawrence. Edith edited several new editions of Lawrence's garden books and knew her personally. Jim brought a huge piece of

Smilax smallii vine to the meeting, which he grew because of Lawrence, who planted it near her front door in Charlotte, North Carolina. (Come to think of it, I think that's what I saw growing on the south side of his house when we visited to rescue plants.) At the end of Edith's talk, Jim gave a lengthy history of the plant, why he admired it, and how he'd learned about it from a talk by Linda Wilson who bought Lawrence's home and helped preserve Lawrence's garden. Edith listened patiently to his presentation after which he asked Edith to drape the Smilax around her shoulders so he could take her picture. Here's a post about the plant from Jim's blog, unfortunately there is no picture of Edith. <http://mcwort.blogspot.com/2008/02/smilax-smallii.html>

Jim's horticultural knowledge was a boon to us all and was apparent especially on the Four Seasons email listserv, where he could be counted on to ID plants, and often provide a historical perspective on plants and horticulture practices. A great baker, Jim brought some delectable pastry and bread to our PVC board meetings. I will miss him.

I met Alma on a PVC trip to visit the Allegheny Chapter in the Pittsburgh area back in 2009 or 2010. Four of us, Betty S, Alma, Mary (whose last name I can't remember,) rode together and a few other members rode with Paul Botting, who organized the trip. Alma was gregarious and a horseback rider as I had been. At that point she thought a riding accident had caused her mobility issues, but would later learn, after seeing a specialist at John's Hopkins, she had a form of muscular dystrophy. Alma was a trooper and never complained about her condition though she struggled at times to navigate some of the garden terrain.

Margot and I visited her little house near Severn Corners to help her unload some gardening paraphernalia before she moved to an assisted living community in Arlington. I'm sorry to say I lost track of her after she no longer came to meetings. But I remember well her cheerful spirit.

#### **From Janet McGhee:**

I met Alma when I went to her house in Arlington and she was giving away her precious plants. She posted that her house was being demolished and she wanted her plants to have new homes. She lamented someone digging up her tree peony with little regard for its roots. I left with many hostas.

After that day I invited her to lunch to see her Hostas replanted. We feasted on lobster tail, which she said was her favorite. Subsequently when she moved to Ballston, I kept in touch by phone. I recall she was upset to learn that a neighbor, who was allegedly a hoarder, had bedbugs. They infected Alma's beautiful apartment not long after she moved in. Management wanted to charge her \$2k to exterminate. She felt trapped but had no alternative but to pay. I recall her language included a lot of expletives. She was a real trooper. One tough cookie. And so knowledgeable about native plants. She volunteered to green up her new home by placing plants in hallways. Miss you, Alma.

#### **From Jim Dronenburg:**

Alma was always a nice person and a friend, but I never saw her garden until she was moving into the apartment and let PVC dig. I still have a nandina, daffodils and Lycoris from that dig.

Jim M was "strange" in that he did NOT want people coming to his house, or his yard. I was in there maybe 20 years ago, and not again until this past summer, and that only incidentally. But he had great stuff in the yard, and in the cold frames. I could never reconcile his "stay away" attitude with the fact that he was very gregarious and loved to be around people. He was always a fount of knowledge. He'd give advice and it was spot on.

He had a LOT of interests—was a gourmet cook, loved music... At the time of his death, he had a disassembled virginal (modern kit) on his dining room table. There was a harpsichord (modern kit) in the living room. That left last week. But his sister turned around and said, “He was given that. HIS harpsichord is down in the basement.” Ai yi yi.... 😊

**From Budne Reinke:**

As Alma was being forced to move from her condo-home where she had lived for about 40 years...she was anxious to share her wonderful hostas with many others.

I had little experience with hostas but with the more than 20 varieties I obtained from Alma, her Hostas have found a very special place in my yard and in my heart.

**From Sue Hodapp:**

I know you all have not seen/or heard from me in quite a while, but your message struck a chord - sadly.... We have lost two of our most productive members of the PVC but as I read about these two, it becomes clear that their range of interests and contributions have been very wide. The interest and involvement in nature is so valuable and rewarding to everyone as well as our natural world. An important way to remember them as well as contribute to life in general is to continue to maintain and contribute to our natural world.

Thank you again for alerting us - and reminding us of the wonderful contributions of people like Jim and Alma. Take care and wishing you all a productive and warming year!

**From Anonymous:**

re Jim McKenney: He was an invaluable resource - a go to guy who had deep knowledge about a wide range of plant materials and a ready willingness to provide answers to botanical questions. He was a one-of-a kind person and will be sorely missed.

**From Elaine Lahn:**

Well, here I am, happy recipient of unwanted (except by me) NARGS seeds. (Thank you Candy.) WIKI is letting me down. What are the growing conditions for *Salpingostylis coelestina*? Better email Jim..uh,oh...My go-to-guy for plants, snakes and frogs of all descriptions and bulbs is unavailable, permanently. How could this be?

A treasure of a person, someone I have known since high school and lost touch with at times. In the 60's Jim and I caught up with each other at the U. of MD campus to and from the parking lot where we commuted. He was often wearing his R.O.T.C. uniform, mandatory participation at the time. I think he planned to major in Zoology and I planned to major in Botany. We and other plant nerd types had expeditions to places like Suitland Bog (is it still there?) to see and collect pitcher plants. When I was taking a summer session at UMI Biological Station at Pellston, I needed to surprise my mom for her July birthday. I wrote to Jim and he arranged for a flower delivery! She was surprised and delighted thanks to lots of work on his part. In October as we chatted he remembered receiving a gift of a tuberose from her. Must have been when he delivered the flowers.

Once at Brookside, (he lived quite nearby) I was late meeting him. I found him at the desk in a lengthy and animated discussion with the volunteer. Jim was the quintessential affable guy. He seemed to need to open up his knowledge to listeners. I used to wonder if he had a photographic memory. He could chat about opera, Greek, Latin, old horticulturists and their books and best of all plants, their discoverers, champions and history of their names. Jim had a deep appreciation for the local plant nerds of recent D. C. area fame.

During our last visit at Brookside in October he recalled in great detail the horticultural contributions of Harry Dewey. Brookside has an area near the entrance dedicated to him but no explanation. Jim and I shared grief about our spouses that day, as we did sometimes. He spoke often and fondly of his family especially Maxine his sister, husband Bobby and family, his

garden. I asked him about the giant yew near his front door. It was a plum yew there since his parents moved in and taking over. We sat in the late afternoon sun. After chewing the fat for over an hour it was time to go. It took him a while to stand. I realized then that his reluctance to move was due to his unsteadiness. Foot neuropathy was a relatively recent challenge due to a diagnosis of diabetes. We walked slowly toward the cars and the sun now low in the sky. Maybe a holiday meet up. Who knew....?

**From Kevin McIntosh:**

I remember the first time I met Jim McKenney. I had taken a leave of absence from the PVC chapter for about 10 years due to my children's myriad activities. When I returned to a spring plant exchange, there was a white haired guy checking people's plants for suitability and correct labelling before they could place them out for the exchange! I remember thinking "Who is this guy"? Well, it turned out, the correct one. Jim knew every plant name and something about every plant. In fact, he knew sooo much about these things that I would find my eyes crossing during his in-depth lectures about them. Through the years we became good friends and frequently discussed our common interests in herpetology (reptiles and amphibians). We would send pictures of what was stirring in our back yards and he always beat me with the first garter snake picture in spring and the last one in fall. We exchanged lots of stories about our reptilian pets when we were kids, always with the theme of freaking out our mothers. Several years ago, we were discussing orchids and I mentioned to him that I had constructed a little habitat outside where I was planning to grow Pleione orchids. Of course, he was something of an expert on these orchids having grown many of the Pleione cultivars. The next time we met, he had one for me which I planted in my habitat where it still thrives today, a treasured plant. Thank you, Jim, for your enthusiastic service to the PVC, sharing of knowledge and plants, and all your stories. You will be missed!

**DUES: \$15 per year. Please send to treasurer Margot Ellis, 2417 N Taylor St., Arlington, VA 22207**

Editor's note: All photographs are by the article authors unless otherwise noted.

PVC web page: <https://nargs.org/chapter/potomac-valley-chapter>

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