



FALLING INTO PLACE

Fagus americana



Rhus typhina

Most of my travels are geared towards being on places when flowers are at their peak and colour is everywhere. it made a change and a very pleasant one to visit somewhere new that still have an abundance of colour even if there was barely a flower on show. Much is made of the autumn/fall colour of the north-east of North America, especially New England. I am also aware that seeing a good show is not a given, but this October I really got lucky, spending time travelling the region as part of my speaking tour for NARGS during a season that was bursting with fabulous vistas of yellow, scarlet and orange and trekking through woods that glowed golden ripening leaves. During my two weeks there was generously hosted by Rosemary Monahan (and Ellen Hornig), Elisabeth Zander, Jennifer Kalb and John Gilrein, all of them taking time out to show me around a diverse selection of sites. in Boston it was a pleasant walk in the woods to see my first hickory trees followed by the collection of glass flowers at the Harvard Museum, where the fine work was quite incredible and it seemed hard to believe that they were in fact made of glass.

Although the season per se was over, I had a firm target plant to see; *Sarracenia purpurea*. I had never before seen any of this iconic genus and Elisabeth took me to two interesting bogs where both emerald green and rich purple forms were found nestled in the sphagnum bogs. Walks in the woods brought the bonus of great views of a spotted owl during the day, a big colony of the unusual walking fern (*Asplenium*





Dryopteris intermedia



Asplenium scolopendrium (New York)



Arisarum triphyllum



Sarracenia purpurea (Ontario)



Asplenium scolopendrium (Ontario)

rhizophyllum) and some great hillsides of colour. And of course, Elisabeth's wonderful rock garden. It was all change in New York where I swapped quiet countryside for bustling metropolis, staying in Brooklyn, riding the subway (I must confess I prefer London's version), hidden community gardens and birding in the impressive and vast cemetery there (so large you really do need a map and a car). An improbable location but excellent for birds and I notched at least ten new species here and on the nearby wetlands.

My few days in upstate New York were different again, where John gave me an insightful look into the richness of the eastern woods. It included a superb colony of the rare *Asplenium scolopendrium* subsp. *americanum* draped across limestone rocks in a secret dell. More superb *Sarracenia purpurea* followed, stunning scarlet stands of *Rhus typhina* (a common plant but these were dazzling), majestic *Liriodendron tulipiferum* with beautifully riven bark and brimstone foliage. Various interesting fruits, barks, leaves and ferns followed, topped off by the unexpected bonus of several *Arisaema triphyllum* which had come into flower. This was no doubt down to the unusually dry and warm weather.

Two final talks and a tour of Carol Clark's garden with strong cider in hand completed the US part of my trip. From here I went north to Toronto to stay with friends; George and Liz Knowles, who have created a wonderful garden over the years with countless saxifrages and ramondas. Here we all got to discover new hidden places from vast woods of golden maples, wetlands with trumpeter swans, a further colony of *Asplenium scolopendrium* and the final flourish of another large colony of *Sarracenia purpurea*, different in character again to the others I had seen. By the time I left for Mexico most of the richly-coloured leaves had drifted to the ground and I count myself lucky to have caught such a vibrant season when I did.

I've included a selection of my favourite photos from my time with you all and many thanks to everyone who came to hear me speak and of course to all of those who helped make my stay comfortable, informative and enjoyable.

Chris Gardner



Sarracenia purpurea



Quercus coccifera



Buttermilk Falls