
1992 Convention and Annual Meeting

Robert W. Hobbs

North Beach, Maryland

The Thirteenth ASA Convention and Annual Meeting will be held May 14-16, 1992 at the Holiday Inn in Solomons, MD. Located at the confluence of the Patuxent River and the Chesapeake Bay, Solomons is a well-known fishing and boating center which has one of the world's deepest natural harbors. The Chesapeake Biological Laboratory featuring a model of the Chesapeake Bay estuarine system is located in Solomons, as is the Calvert Marine Museum. The area is rich with sites of historical, geographical, and botanical interest. The Calvert Cliffs, discovered by Captain John Smith on his exploration of the bay in 1608, extend for 30 miles along the western shore. With heights up to 120 feet, the banks are rich with fossils from the Miocene Age (10-24 million years ago).

The convention headquarters will be at the Holiday Inn at Solomons. Registration will begin mid-afternoon on Thursday, May 14. Following dinner on your own, three short talks will be presented in preparation for the tour on Friday. George Switzer will describe the origin of the collection of Beltsville hybrids at Scientists Cliffs, which will be visited on Friday. Next, Richard West will describe the work that he and Bill Miller have done at Ten Oaks Nursery, one of the nurseries which received the initial distribution of Glenn Dale azaleas. Glenn Dale azaleas will be seen in great abundance at the two azalea gardens and nurseries that will be visited Friday. Then, Bill Miller will discuss some research he has been conducting on Ben Morrison, for whom the sponsoring chapter is named.

During the day Friday, attendees will be able to take a horticultural tour of the area, featuring, of course, azaleas. On the tour we will visit the 3-acre informal garden and nursery (Cavalier Nursery) of Sue and George Switzer. The Switzer garden contains over 1000 varieties of azaleas, including a large collection of Glenn Dales. We will also visit the Azalea Trace Nursery of Charles and Wanda Hanners, which at this writing has 15,000 container azaleas of 1500 varieties and 700 of their own hybrids. The collection of Beltsville hybrids at Scientists Cliffs will also be visited.

A box lunch will be served at nearby Christ Church. The church dates from 1672, although the present structure was built in 1772. A unique small garden of biblical plants will be available for a brief tour. Along the way to the azalea gardens, we will visit the Battle Creek Cypress Swamp, for a stroll on the boardwalk through the only significant stand of 100-foot-tall bald cypress trees this far north, and for a walk along the Chesapeake Bay and the fresh water ponds at Flag Ponds Nature Park. Perhaps we will get a glimpse of the Blue Flag iris for which the park is named. Friday evening will feature a talk by ASA past president and chapter member James A. (Tony) Dove, currently horticulturist at the Tryon Palace and Gardens in New Bern, North Carolina.

Saturday, attendees will be able to participate in a tour of historic southern Maryland. In the morning we will visit Sotterley, the only surviving colonial plantation that is still privately owned and yet open to the public. Overlooking the Patuxent River, the mansion was built in 1717 and was home to distinguished Maryland families for two centuries.

Following lunch at Sotterley, the buses will proceed to St. Mary's City, the fourth permanent settlement in British North America, established in 1634. The

site features reconstructed 17th century buildings including Maryland's first State House (built in 1676,) a square-rigged ship and a tobacco plantation. Of course, there are colonial display gardens at both Sotterley and St. Mary's City.

The banquet and annual meeting will be held at the Holiday Inn on Saturday evening. Fred Galle, formerly Director of Horticulture at Callaway Gardens, Pine Mountain, Georgia and author of the book *Azaleas* will be the featured speaker.

There will also be an azalea plant sale, along with azalea tee shirts designed and painted by Jean Cox and beveled glass etchings of azaleas, one designed by Jean Cox and the other from the December 1984 issue of *THE AZALEAN* as obtained from Dr. and Mrs. Charles Evans.

One feature to note—the planned tours do not require the buses and the participants inside to travel very far: the longest distance travelled on Friday is 25 miles and on Saturday, 20 miles (one way.)

You may wish to come early and stay late. Fred Galle will be speaking at the U.S. National Arboretum on the evening of Wednesday, May 13 on the subject of "Discovering North American Rhododendrons with Emphasis on Native Deciduous Azaleas and a Brief Discussion of Native Evergreen Rhododendrons." The U.S. National Arboretum in Washington, D.C., is a little over an hour's drive from Solomons. You may wish to also visit the Calvert Marine Museum, Calvert Cliffs State Park, and the state park at the Cove Point Lighthouse.

Solomons can be reached by automobile about 50 miles south of the