
More Princess Azalea Introductions

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The Princess Azaleas are a new hybrid group characterized by medium to large, double and hose-in-hose double flowers of clear colors on compact, hardy, evergreen plants. Bred for greenhouse forcing and landscape planting, they have been developed at the University of Maryland, and are being propagated and introduced by Andy Adams, Jr. of Ten Oaks Nursery, Clarksville, Maryland.

The first five introductions were announced one year ago in a March 1993 article in *THE AZALEAN* [1]. They were: 'Princess Andrea', light red, hose-in-hose double; 'Princess Deborah', salmon-pink, hose-in-hose double; 'Princess Megan', light pink, hose-in-hose double; 'Princess Ruth', pink, slightly ruffled, partial double; and 'Princess Sharon', white, slightly double flower.

Background

As explained in some more detail in the March 1993 article, the original crosses were made in the spring of 1950 for the purpose of producing larger flowers on the popular Kurume and other azaleas having a fairly compact growth habit. The large-flowered Belgian variety 'Vervaeneana' as the seed parent was pollinated with 'Amoena', 'Coral Bells', 'Hexe', 'Hinodegiri', 'Mucronatum', *Rhododendron kaempferi*, 'Pink Pearl', *R. simsii*, and two azaleas of unknown origin, one pink and one white. From 1954 until 1977, controlled crosses were made of selections from the resulting group of plants and their progeny with additional cultivars being included in the program beginning in 1958.

Selection was made for plants with a moderately vigorous, but compact and free-branching growth habit with medium-to-large flowers of clear colors. Other characteristics looked for were early flowering, floriferousness, and long-lasting flowers. While the initial emphasis was on selections for outdoor planting in the central Maryland area (U.S.D.A. plant hardiness zone 6B, 0 to -5F), the major emphasis from 1960 to 1977 when the last crosses were made was to produce types for greenhouse forcing. All seedling plants were eventually planted out-of-doors to ascertain their winter survival characteristics.

New Introductions

This article introduces four more Princess Azaleas: 'Princess Allison', 'Princess Connie', 'Princess Mary Lee', and 'Princess Tessa.' The following gives pedigree and descriptions for the new introductions. Sizes stated are in centimeters (2.54 cm = 1 inch). Color descriptions are based on the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) Colour Chart of 1966, and, unless stated otherwise, the comparative bloom times were for 1983 at College Park, Maryland.

'Princess Mary Lee' was selected and named in honor of Mary Lee Banfield who, with her husband, Paul Landon Banfield, founded the Landon School in Bethesda, Maryland. The school is the site of the Landon Azalea Garden Festival which features the Perkins azalea garden. Limited numbers of one-year old plants of 'Princess Mary Lee' and the three other new introductions will be made available to the public for the first time at the 41st Annual Landon Azalea Garden Festival, April 29—May 1. Additionally, limited quantities of the first five hybrids introduced last year will also be available. Twenty-five cents from the sale of each plant will be donated to the Horticultural Research Fund at the University of Maryland at College Park.

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'Princess Allison'

Large double white flower (to 7 cm. dia.), spring leaves 1.25 x 3.5 cm., plant habit round-spreading to 25 cm. at three years. Bloom May 7.

Pedigree

| Year | Cross | Progeny Designation |
|------|--------------------------------|---------------------|
| 1950 | 'Vervaeneana' x 'Coral Bells' | MD 50-2-3 |
| 1950 | 'Vervaeneana' x 'Pink Pearl' | MD 50-7-44 |
| 1957 | MD 50-7-44 x MD 50-2-3 | MD 57-1-3 |
| 1960 | 'Chimes' x 'Crimson Glory' | MD 60-3-2 |
| 1960 | 'Chimes' x MD 57-1-3 | MD 60-7-4 |
| 1960 | U.S.D.A. B.44838 x MD 50-7-44 | MD 60-11-1 |
| 1961 | 'Chimes' x U.S.D.A. B.44838 | MD 61-10-1 |
| 1964 | MD 60-7-4 x 'Dr. Alderfer' | MD 64-39-1 |
| 1965 | MD 60-3-2 x MD 64-10-1 | MD 65-17-1 |
| 1968 | 'White Christmas' x MD 65-17-1 | MD 68-13-3 |
| 1968 | MD 60-11-1 x MD 64-39-1 | MD 68-46-5 |
| 1977 | MD 68-13-3 x MD 68-46-5 | MD 77-8-5 |

'Princess Allison'

'Princess Connie'

Original seedling was a large hose-in-hose double flower (to 6 cm. dia.), candy stripe pink (RHS 61D) on white mutating to present pink with white edge form, leaf 1.25 x 4.5 cm. Plant habit broader than high, plant canopy at three years 28 cm. diameter x 22 cm. high. Bloom May 7.

Pedigree

| Year | Cross | Progeny Designation |
|------|--------------------------------|---------------------|
| 1950 | 'Vervaeneana' x 'Amoena' | MD 50-1-1 |
| 1950 | 'Vervaeneana' x 'Coral Bells' | MD 50-2-3 |
| 1950 | 'Vervaeneana' x 'Mucronatum' | MD 50-5-7 |
| 1950 | 'Vervaeneana' x 'Pink Pearl' | MD 50-7-3 |
| | | MD 50-7-41 |
| | | MD 50-7-44 |
| 1953 | MD 50-1-1 x MD 50-5-7 | MD 53-5-1 |
| 1957 | MD 50-7-3 x MD 50-2-3 | MD 57-1-3 |
| 1959 | 'Triumph' x MD 50-7-41 | MD 59-4-11 |
| | | MD 59-4-20 |
| 1959 | U.S.D.A. PI 226144 x MD 53-5-1 | MD 59-14-2 |
| | | MD 59-14-3 |
| 1960 | 'Chimes' x MD 57-1-3 | MD 60-7-4 |
| 1960 | U.S.D.A. B.44838 x MD 50-7-44 | MD 60-11-1 |
| 1961 | 'Chimes' x U.S.D.A. B.44838 | MD 61-10-1 |
| 1962 | MD 59-14-2 x MD 59-14-3 | MD 62-30-1 |
| 1964 | MD 60-7-4 x MD 59-4-20 | MD 64-39-1 |
| 1966 | MD 59-4-11 x MD 60-7-4 | MD 66-17-1 |
| 1966 | MD 61-10-1 x MD 62-30-1 | MD 66-51-2 |
| 1968 | MD 60-11-1 x MD 64-39-1 | MD 68-46-5 |
| 1969 | MD 66-51-2 x MD 66-17-1 | MD 69-41-1 |
| 1973 | MD 69-41-1 x MD 68-46-5 | MD 73-13-5 |
| | Mutating to (sport) | MD 73-13-5B |

'Princess Connie'

'Princess Mary Lee'

Large, hose-in-hose double flower (to 6 cm. dia.), clear pink (RHS 55B), leaf 1.5 x 4 cm. Bloom May 10.

Pedigree

| Year | Cross | Progeny Designation |
|------|--------------------------------|---------------------|
| 1950 | 'Vervaeneana' x 'Amoena' | MD 50-1-1 |
| 1950 | 'Vervaeneana' x 'Coral Bells' | MD 50-2-3 |
| 1950 | 'Vervaeneana' x 'Mucronatum' | MD 50-5-7 |
| 1950 | 'Vervaeneana' x 'Pink Pearl' | MD 50-7-3 |
| | | MD 50-7-41 |
| | | MD 50-7-44 |
| 1953 | MD 50-1-1 x MD 50-5-7 | MD 53-5-1 |
| 1957 | MD 50-7-3 x MD 50-2-3 | MD 57-1-3 |
| 1959 | 'Triumph' x MD 50-7-41 | MD 59-4-11 |
| | | MD 59-4-20 |
| 1959 | U.S.D.A. PI 226146 x MD 53-5-1 | MD 59-14-2 |
| | | MD 59-14-3 |
| 1960 | 'Chimes' x MD 57-1-3 | MD 60-7-4 |
| 1960 | U.S.D.A. B.44838 x MD 50-7-44 | MD 60-11-1 |
| 1961 | 'Chimes' x U.S.D.A. B.44838 | MD 61-10-1 |
| 1962 | MD 59-14-2 x MD 59-14-3 | MD 62-30-1 |
| 1964 | MD 60-7-4 x MD 59-4-20 | MD 64-39-1 |
| 1966 | MD 59-4-11 x MD 60-7-4 | MD 66-17-1 |
| 1966 | MD 61-10-1 x MD 62-30-1 | MD 66-51-2 |
| 1968 | MD 60-11-1 x MD 64-39-1 | MD 68-46-5 |
| 1969 | MD 66-51-2 x MD 66-17-1 | MD 69-41-1 |
| 1973 | MD 69-41-1 x MD 68-46-5 | MD 73-13-3 |

'Princess Mary Lee'

'Princess Tessa'

Large hose-in-hose double flower (to 6 cm. dia.), deep salmon (RHS 47C), leaf 1.25 x 3 cm. Bloom May 12.

Pedigree

| Year | Cross | Progeny Designation |
|------|----------------------------------|---------------------|
| 1950 | 'Vervaeneana' x 'Amoena' | MD 50-1-1 |
| 1950 | 'Vervaeneana' x 'Mucronatum' | MD 50-5-7 |
| 1950 | 'Vervaeneana' x <i>R. simsii</i> | MD 50-9-1 |
| 1953 | MD 50-9-1 x MD 50-1-1 | MD 53-3-1 |
| 1953 | MD 50-1-1 x MD 50-5-7 | MD 53-5-1 |
| 1958 | U.S.D.A. B.44838 x MD 50-7-41 | MD 58-13-1 |
| 1959 | U.S.D.A. PI 226144 x MD 53-3-1 | MD 59-14-4 |
| 1959 | 'Triumph' x MD 53-5-1 | MD 59-4-2 |
| 1961 | 'Chimes' x MD 58-13-1 | MD 61-13-3 |
| 1962 | MD 59-14-4 x MD 59-4-2 | MD 62-31-1 |
| 1966 | MD 61-13-3 x MD 62-31-1 | MD 66-54-1 |
| 1967 | U.S.D.A. B.44838 x 'Dr. Bergman' | MD 67-13-3 |
| 1977 | MD 66-54-1 x MD 67-13-3 | MD 77-1-A |

(Use of "A" in number indicates plant is fine for landscaping, but less suitable for forcing.)

Reference

(1) Shanks, J. B. and A. N. Adams, Jr. *Introduction of the Princess Azaleas*, THE AZALEAN, March 1993, 15(1), 9-11. □

Observations On Azalea Culture

Courtland Lee

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Last summer (1993) was one of the hottest and driest on record for Maryland, east of Washington, D.C. The temperature remained in the high 90's—even 100's—for weeks in July and August. Although humidity was high, there was little precipitation. Perhaps all our rain fell in the Mississippi Valley. It did afford some interesting observations of how mass azalea plantings survived these drought conditions.

Of particular concern for these observations were several local embankment plantings of many varieties and numerous individual plants. A pattern of mortality was noticed and a theory is proposed to explain these observations. It appears to this author that failure of plants was more a question of ground water hydrology than one of hardiness of a particular cultivar. No tests were directed to drought hardiness of particular cultivars. Where moderate watering was done in the morning or evening on beds containing several hundred cultivars, including many of the Glenn Dales, no problem seems to be cultivar-specific.

Over the past few years we at Boxlee have transplanted, largely from Frank White's collection, many of his named varieties and have had success in establishment of well over 95%. Of those plants that did not make it, most were planted too deep or the mice got to them the first winter. It should be noted that Frank White did not use the light pine bark medium that seems to be catching on today. For the many other cultivars which were not from Frank White that were transplanted in a pine bark medium, care and extra watering had to take place to ensure a "wick" effect didn't dry out the plant before it became established. Our success ratio with these plants was not as high. Mulching helps, as well as mixing some native soil at planting time. Our soil is a mixture of sand and clay. It should be noted that none of these plants are in the direct sun.

From the above background I made the following observation of some large commercial embankment plantings of azaleas in the area. It seemed that the greatest mortality of newly transplanted plants occurred at the top third of the slope. Not all plants died but the pattern was obvious. Also, in one case where there was a level gouge in the embankment where water could collect, little mortality occurred even though in an identical level planting nearby mortality was up to 50%. It is the opinion of this author that the explanation of this lies in the behavior of the ground water relative to the surface of the bank, and that after a period of hot searing weather the hardened ground is not receptive to rainfall and most subsequent rain immediately runs off. The Diagrams A and B illustrate these observations.

The conclusion is that some sort of trenching along a slope in an area unlikely to be watered will improve transplant success. In addition first year transplants need watering in dry spells since they can become points of selective drying due to the light planting medium.

Courtland Lee is an azalea grower and a Certified Professional Geologist. Boxlee is a 10-acre historic site a mile from the Plant Introduction Station in Glenn Dale, MD. Mr. Lee has been a long-time member of the Ben Morrison Chapter of the Azalea Society of America. □

