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# Roundtable Discussion on THE AZALEAN

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In order to maintain and improve the ability of the Azalea Society of America to achieve its goals of promoting interest and exchange of knowledge of the azalea, and to study the principles of hybridization, propagation, culture and care of azaleas, the editor of **THE AZALEAN** led a panel discussion as part of the 1995 convention and annual meeting. Since the Society's quarterly journal, **THE AZALEAN**, is the main means of communication within the society, it is essential that material published in **THE AZALEAN** supports these goals. The discussion focussed on general content, subjects for articles, the need for regular columns, format, and how to inspire contributors to the Journal.

The panel discussion was held on Thursday evening, May 4, 1995, the first night of the convention, with the editor acting as moderator. The three panelists were:

Nick Milfeld, nurseryman, Riverside, CA

Murray Sheffield, azalea hobbyist, Wetumpka, AL

Gene Westlake, professional horticulturist, Dallas, TX

These panelists represented a wide range of interest and growing conditions.

Each of the three panelists made brief presentations to answers three questions posed by the moderator:

- (1) What is good about **THE AZALEAN**?
- (2) What changes would improve **THE AZALEAN**?
- (3) What should be specifically addressed in articles in **THE AZALEAN**?

The presentations were followed by comments from the audience. Most of those attending the Convention remained in the room and many became participants in the discussion through their thoughtful and helpful comments.

A summary of the discussions is as follows: In general, the participants (panel and audience) seemed satisfied with **THE AZALEAN** and its contents. A desire for the use of more color photographs was expressed. Several subjects for future directions include:

- Articles on commercial growing
- Articles on species groups in other subgenera of *Rhododendrons* including *R. vireya*
- Articles on recently developed hybrid groups--Holly Springs, Carla, Huang and new varieties in older hybrid groups

- Articles on regional cultural problems and solutions
- Republication of articles of importance from previous issues of **THE AZALEAN** and short items of special interest from other periodicals and books
- Regional "bulletin boards" section
- A "Question and Answer" column
- Articles on cultural basics, such as when to fertilize, etc.
- New product reviews
- Articles on "azalea personalities"
- Articles on hybridizing
- Procedures on preparing azaleas for flower shows
- Questions without immediate answers, i.e., who knows where to get \_\_\_\_\_ or how to solve the problem of \_\_\_\_\_?
- Characteristics of azaleas not commonly discussed, i.e., does a particular form of flower last longer than others?

In other words--lots of good ideas! A few even volunteered to *write* articles. Members, get out your pen and paper, or fire-up your computer! Send your questions, requests, observations to the Editor, 737 Walnut Avenue, North Beach, MD 20714-9644. As you can tell from the list, members would like to know your personal experiences in all aspects of azalea culture. A complete article is best, of course, but just your questions and observations are of interest to readers of **THE AZALEAN**. □