

classic azalea companion, but red-bud and any small, upright evergreens are also good.

Spring blooming bulbs make a sparkling setting for the main attraction of azaleas. They can be planted fairly close if you plant them when the azaleas are small. Once established, bulb roots won't interfere with azalea roots because they go deep. The "little bulbs," such as "Glory of the Snow" (*Chionodoxa*), "Spanish Squill" (*Scilla campanulata*), Snowdrop (*Galanthus nivalis*) are real treasures. Start with a few and in a few years you'll have drifts of them. These little gems scatter their prolific seeds which grow into blooming-size bulbs in a few years. *Chionodoxa* is a true blue color, not found in azaleas, and will eventually colonize into blue pools around them. The Squills are a little later and come in a lavender blue, pink and white.

If you use ground covers with azaleas, do so with care. Don't allow them to intrude past the drip line of the plant. Be especially careful with *Ajuga*. It can quickly become rampant and seed will either blow or be carried to the middle of the lawn where it will choke out grass. Keep in mind the common name for *Ajuga*: "bugleweed."

The above discussion just skims the surface of compatible plants. For further reading, I recommend some of the handbooks published by the Brooklyn Botanical Gardens.

This is another article prepared by Ruth Harrington for publication in The Azalea Clipper. Ruth hybridized two beautiful azaleas, 'Green Goddess' and 'Highlander'. She also wrote for the Journal Newspapers. This article was prepared in 1987. Ruth Harrington died in 1989. □

PRIZE FOR BEST ARTICLE IN THE AZALEAN—1996

Dr. Kathleen A. Kron and James O. Thornton

In 1989, the Board of Governors authorized the editor of **THE AZALEAN** to establish an annual prize for the best article to appear in **THE AZALEAN**. The concept was to acquire through donations, a fund which when invested would provide an annual prize for the best article published in **THE AZALEAN**. Funds were donated by the following chapters to establish the "CHAPTER'S PRIZE":

Tri-State
Richmond, Virginia
Ben Morrison
Northern Virginia
Brookside Gardens

As stated in the September 1990 issue, the best article each year will be selected by a poll of the membership. The prize will be announced and awarded at the Annual Meeting of the Society.

The prize for the best article in **THE AZALEAN** for 1996 was awarded at the annual meeting in Atlanta. In 1996 there was a tie for the honor which was shared by **Dr. Kathkeen A. Kron** for her article "Identifying the Native Azaleas" which appeared in the December 1996 issue and by **Jim Thornton** for his article "Fred Galle" which appeared in the June 1996 issue. Congratulations!

The prize has been awarded since 1990. The recipients to date have been:

1995 Richard T. West and William C. Miller III
"The Ten Oaks Azaleas and the Glenn Dale Distribution Project"
September 1995 issue of **THE AZALEAN**.

1994 Steve Brainerd
"Designing With Azaleas"
December 1994 issue

1993 Robert T. Stelloh
"George Harding Azalea Garden-A Progress Report"
December 1993 issue

1992 Richard T. West
"Easy Propagation of Azaleas at Home"
December 1992 issue

1991 Jane Newman
"In Praise of the Greenwoods on the East Coast"
December 1991 issue

1990 Ajit Thakur
"The Enchanting Satsuki"
March 1990 issue □

Native Azaleas on Roan Mountain, Tennessee

J. Raymond Goza

Lilburn, Georgia

My program this evening will be a slide tour of Roan and Yellow Mountain area of the Southern Appalachian Mountains. This area is located along the Appalachian Trail and boundaries of Tennessee and North Carolina.

Before I start the slides I would like to tell you how we—Ann and I—became familiar with Roan. About 1973 we read an article in the Atlanta paper about the natural native rhododendron gardens on the crest of Roan Mountain. That June we traveled to Roan with our two young children in a pick-up truck camper. The Catawba rhodies were beautiful. I recall seeing only one or two “leggy” azalea (*Rhododendron calendulaceum*) along the roadside as we entered the Rhodie Gardens.

We were told by a Forest Service Ranger that it was permissible for self-contained camper vehicles to stay the night in the large parking lot near the Gardens. (I doubt this is permissible now.) This would be a night my family will never forget. As we say in the south, “It come up a cloud.” At 6,300 feet we were in the middle of the largest lightning storm of our lives. We survived.

A few years later we received some literature in the mail from the Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy. We joined this group and later received more information about the annual conference and guided hikes to Grassy Ridge or Yellow Mountain, describing the abundance of Rhodies and *R. calendulaceum*. We have attended about six conferences.

The Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy is a non-profit, charitable organization founded in 1974 to preserve critical areas of the Southern Appalachian region for public benefit.

The Grassy Ridge hikers meet at Carvers Gap, located between Roan Mountain, TN and Bakersville, NC. The time is around 8:00AM. Some years heavy fog is present at this time of day. By 10:00AM the fog begins to clear. By 12:00 noon, clear skies. The distance to Grassy Ridge is about 2.5 miles. Five miles round trip. Along the way our hike leader, Ed Schell, botanizes every grass, weed and moss. I think he now recognizes me as the nut who keeps his head and camera in the *calendulaceum*. We follow the Appalachian Trail north. The bald mountain views are magnificent. Flame azaleas here, there, everywhere. Individual plants—small groups—large flaming swarms. Colors: pale yellow—golden yellow—orange to red. No protection from the wind or sun. They are loaded with flowers.

A lot of these slides show dead trees. Ann always asks —“Raymond, why do you take pictures of dead trees?” Her idea of a good photo is a beautiful azalea with a Wal-Mart store as background.

As we walk, the quietness is deafening. Entering the large acreage of Catawbas on Grassy Ridge the trail goes through and under the Rhodies.



The roar of bumble bees; buzzing and pollinating. The heavy fragrance of the Catawbas permeates the mountain. This is reason enough to keep me returning.

As we return to Carvers Gap we stop to admire the goats and their guard dogs, trucked in from Oklahoma each spring to keep the balds clear of blackberry vines. It is 3:00PM back at the car. Five miles of walking up hills and down hills without seeing any "facilities" public or private—not even a Wal-Mart!



Raymond Goza has been employed by the Norfolk Southern Railway Company as a Morse Telegrapher and Communications Technician. He is a FAA certified pilot. He is the owner of Goza Nursery. Ray is also a

member of the Azalea Society, of America, the American Rhododendron Society, International Plant Propagators Society, Mens Garden Club of America and the Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy.

Photographs by the author □