

VOLUME 22

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# THE **A**zalea

*Journal of the Azalea Society of America*



**2000 Convention Report**

**How Azaleas Came  
to Our Gardens**

**Research Notes**



Post Office Box 34536  
West Bethesda, Maryland  
20827-0536

# President's Letter

William F. Bode — Covington, Louisiana

Last week, when I was reminded that the time had arrived to send to you my column about the Society and its business for the next issue of **THE AZALEAN**, I went back to some of the previous issues to look for a subject that had not been discussed and could be a column to stir hearts and souls, to make you want to have a big parade with floats and bands to proclaim Eureka! Well, I didn't find it so I will not write that column.

What I did find was one topic that has been belabored and belabored: Increase the membership, we must grow! This was pointedly brought out in a Board of Directors meeting when the membership decline was brought up. General Bryghte Godbold made the comment "let us forget this bigness thing, let us concentrate on the mission of our Society"! That comment sparked a discussion that turned out to be a learning session for all of the members. It pointed out to us that the

new electronic additions with all of their technical brilliance were ancillary to the voice of the Society's mission — **THE AZALEAN**.

The continued improvement in the presentation of the articles, printing style, and color improvement are all due to a lot of hard work and improved technology. How would you react if one day **THE AZALEAN** was delivered to you with a beautiful picture on the front, a list of officers, our mission statement, and nothing else but blank pages? Farfetched??

We have improved a lot of things but not the submission of articles for print. This is **OUR** voice. Let it be heard loud and clear. I would ask you to think about a blank page journal and then find what you can contribute, whether it be an article or the name of a person who could and would produce one.

Remember, it's **OUR** voice.

## On the Cover:

This plate from the *Botanical Magazine* in 1812 (35:t.1480) is the nomenclatural type for *R. simsii*. The corolla of *R. simsii* may range in color from white to red. The colorist appears to have over-emphasized the saturation of the red. No less an authority than E.H. Wilson noted this evergreen azalea from Southeast Asia was a key parent in most of what we commonly call 'Indian Azaleas'. [Image and caption courtesy of Don Voss, Ed.]

## Errata

Last issue should have carried, below the masthead title, number and date, as: **THE AZALEAN**  
Volume 22 Number 2 June 2000  
p. 28, column 3, end of first sentence in the first full paragraph: The term should be specific epithet.

## 2000 Roster Corrections

A few errors and omissions occurred in the recent ASA Roster for 2000. We apologize for any inconvenience caused.

Note: If an e-mail address from the printed Roster does not seem to work, refer to the Online Roster at <http://www.azaleas.org>.

## Add to your roster listing:

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Revise in your rosters:  
Chapter Officers

Ben Morrison  
President Robert McWhorter  
Oconee Chapter  
President Mike McNeal  
Tri-State  
President Robin Hahn

# Azalea Society of America

The Azalea Society of America, organized December 9, 1977 and incorporated in the District of Columbia, is an educational and scientific non-profit association devoted to the culture, propagation and appreciation of azaleas Subgenera *Tsutsusi* and *Pentanthera* of the genus *Rhododendron* in the Heath family (*Ericaceae*).

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Regular membership is open to all interested parties for an annual dues amount of \$25.00; life membership for an individual is \$500.00. Members receive **THE AZALEAN** and are eligible for participation in all activities of the Society including those of the chapter with which the member affiliates. For information and a membership application, write to the Membership Committee, Azalean Society of America, P.O. Box 34536, West Bethesda, MD 20827-0536.

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Opinions and views expressed in **THE AZALEAN** are those of the contributors or the Editor, not necessarily those of the Society, and are presented to foster a wider appreciation and knowledge of azaleas. Advertisements are presented as a service to our readers and do not imply endorsement by the Azalea Society of America. Advertising and other contributions to **THE AZALEAN** are used exclusively to help defray the costs of publishing **THE AZALEAN**.

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# Mark Your Calendars for Big Conventions

## ASA 2001 Convention — Asheville, North Carolina

The annual meeting and convention of the Azalea Society of America will be held in Asheville, North Carolina, on June 14-17 (Thursday through Sunday), 2001, with a focus on native azaleas in the mountains. A group of Society members living in North Carolina will be hosting the 2001 Convention. Asheville is nestled in the Blue Ridge Mountains. *At this time, all information is tentative and subject to change.*

Our convention headquarters is the beautifully wooded and landscaped campus of the University of North Carolina - Asheville, located one mile north of downtown Asheville, North Carolina. Housing is in the Mills Residence Hall, near the dining hall and the University of North Carolina Arboretum. Accommodation prices will be economical.

Registration to the convention may be limited; **early registration is highly recommended.**

Trips we are considering include:

- Blue Ridge Parkway (bus, frequent stops) to see native azaleas and wildflowers in their natural habitats

- Wayah Bald (bus, some stops) — *R. calendulaceum*, *R. arborescens*, wildflowers
- Copper Bald hike (small van, all day, **strenuous** 4-mile hike on the Appalachian Trail, limited space available), *R. calendulaceum*, *R. arborescens*, *R. viscosum*, *R. cumberlandense*, many interspecific hybrids
- North Carolina Arboretum and its National Azalea Repository
- Local private gardens, retail nurseries, other sights and sites
- Biltmore Estate, Gardens, Winery
- Pre- and post-convention tours

For additional information or comments, please contact either Bob Stelloh at 828-697-9959, [bstelloh@aol.com](mailto:bstelloh@aol.com), or Ed Collins at 828-697-9228, [azaleaed@brinet.com](mailto:azaleaed@brinet.com). Remember, you can get regularly updated information online by going to [www.azaleas.org](http://www.azaleas.org) and then clicking on '2001 Convention' for the latest update and to print out a copy of the registraton form you can mail in. There will be a registration form and further information in the winter issue of **THE AZALEAN**.

## ASA-ARS Joint Convention in 2002 — Atlanta, Georgia

Work is already underway on a joint convention of the ASA and the American Rhododendron Society. It will be held April 17-22, 2002 in Atlanta. Jim Thornton is coordinating for the ASA, and Earl Sommerville is coordinating for the local ARS chapter, the Azaleas Chapter. Roger Duvall is Publicity Chairman and is already planning articles for the Journal ARS. Contacts for information: Jim Thornton, 770-483-1593, [jot@worldnet.att.net](mailto:jot@worldnet.att.net); Earl Sommerville, 404-428-3226, [earlsommerville@mindspring.com](mailto:earlsommerville@mindspring.com). A preliminary website for the 2002 convention is <http://arsazalea.tripod.com>.



Who says ASA conventions are all work and no play? Certainly not John Migas, Jim Campbell, Dixie Lee and Vince Ciolino (left to right) who chose to enjoy the azaleas from the water-side view.

*[Photo by William C. Miller III]*

## Azalea Calendar

October 14, 2000: Brookside Gardens Annual Plant Auction, held at the US National Arboretum. To donate plants or for information, contact Diane Gregg (301-299-6456 or [glassnob@aol.com](mailto:glassnob@aol.com)) or Bill Miller (301-365-0692 or [bill@theazaleaworks.com](mailto:bill@theazaleaworks.com)).

June 14-17, 2001: ASA Convention and Annual Meeting, Asheville, North Carolina (see above for contacts and more information).

April 17-22, 2002: Joint ASA-ARS Convention, Atlanta, Georgia (see above for contacts and more information).

# A Note from Your Editor

Barbara Stump — Nacogdoches, Texas

As of this issue THE AZALEAN will carry a seasonal indication on the masthead. We will maintain the volume and number designations so that the journal will have consistency for archiving and professional research purposes. Thus, this issue is Volume 22, Number 3, Fall 2000. The decision to shift to this designation was taken after deliberation with President Bode and, I believe, will cause no major delays in producing the journal.

After careful thought and reviewing what I had in hand, the convention presentations will actually be featured in both the fall and winter issues. This fall issue focuses on the historic context of both the convention venue and the historical journey of azaleas to America so ably told by Don Voss. Next issue will feature hybridizing by Fred Minch, the "Tray Mountain Azalea Connection" by Jeff Beasley, Maarten van der Giessen's article on

evaluation criteria, Hank Bruno's on Callaway Gardens, and mine on the new Ruby M. Mize Azalea Garden. But there will still be room in the winter issue for member articles, and in all the issues to follow.

Future issues will maintain a schedule that is closer to the beginning of the season rather than the end of it as much as feasible given the submissions for publication. They will meet all required dates for publication of upcoming annual meeting registration information and election slates and ballots.

I am very happy to say that the chapters have been very forthcoming to my requests for news. I hope you will all think about President Bode's call for articles. It really is *your* journal and the voice of the Society.

Just to show you how easy it is to help out, I invite you to send in de-

tails about any Azalea Trails that you know of in your towns, chapters, and regions. I plan this for the Winter issue so we can all plan trips to visit such sites. Because we have members all across the nation, there should be quite a schedule of options, allowing you to "follow the spring" and the azaleas across the country. Then, of course, the Society would like to know if you've found a particularly good event and we will publish that in the Spring or Summer issue. A great example of this is the article on the annual Landon Azalea Festival, which we featured in the Azalea Gardens section of the March issue this year. It really is just that easy.

For the record, deadlines for submissions are as follows:

Winter issue:	October 15
Spring issue:	January 15
Summer issue:	April 15
Fall issue:	July 15

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## 2000 Convention Report

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*[Compiled from my notes and those published by Frank Bryan and Frances Louer in the Oconee Chapter Newsletter and the "Azalea Clipper" of the Northern Virginia chapter, respectively, Ed.]*

Whatever we can say about the Annual Meeting in Charleston, South Carolina, will pale by comparison with what it really was. Attendance was great, with 131 members coming from all parts of the U.S.

For those of you who could not journey to Charleston, one of the most valuable aspects of actually going to the meeting, besides the chance to see old friends and getting live plants of rare and unique provenance, was the quality of the slide presentations. The presenters all had many slides of one-of-kind azaleas not well known or not widely distributed. This was particularly the case with Fred Minch's hy-

brids, the new native hybrids the Beasleys are beginning to select and breed, and Maarten van der Giessen's "look back" at some old favorites that deserve to be offered again by garden centers. Don Voss's article in this issue is a goldmine of carefully distilled research on azalea origins and routes of distribution, reading much like a tale out of Marco Polo. However, what we cannot show you, because of space limitations, are the maps of each country of origin and the slides of the half-dozen evergreen azaleas that he considers of special significance in ornamental horticulture that reached the West from 1800-1850. Perhaps in the

future we can import these into the Society's website as a photographic convention synopsis. The wealth of expertise among our membership is most impressive.

This leads me to remind you about the learning side of these conventions. For many of us these are fun ways to get together and discuss our favorite angle on azaleas, whether it be hybridizing, collecting and growing, or simply visiting them in great gardens. But it appears they are also great learning opportunities, with enough substance to entice horticulture students of the future into growing azaleas, even be-

coming members of the Society. Could we consider giving a few complimentary registrations for local youth at the chapter level, perhaps?

As usual, the meeting was a rich combination of evening presentations and daytime tours and the occasional plant sale. Following are just some observations, with a few illustrations, to try to give you the flavor of this unique experience.

### Evening Speakers

**Wednesday evening, March 22**, we met for three presentations. **Kathy Woolsey** of Cypress Gardens introduced us to the myriad pleasures of Charleston, South Carolina. Many of the area plantation gardens were developed and persist because their owners were wealthy and had come from Barbados. This heritage accounts for the strong Caribbean influence in the city. It lies in USDA Zone 9, with long summers, humidity in the 90% range frequently, and winters so brief you miss them if you sleep late. She mentioned that with this sort of weather many native Charlestonians don't even plant gardens in the summer, it's so hard to work in them in the heat. The city is a lively one, but history is a main ingredient. Charleston was André Michaux's main base of operations during his 10-year botanizing. Belgian-Indian hybrids were introduced there in the late 1800s and early 1900s, while Kurumes were planted in the 1920s and 1930s. The Southern Indicas such as *R.* 'Formosa', *R.* 'Judge Solomon', *R.* 'President Claeys' do quite well, but the Kurumes die out in a few years. Other popular local azaleas are *R.* 'Red Ruffles', *R.* 'Christmas Cheer', *R.* 'Mother's Day', *R.* 'Fashion', *R.* 'Happy Days', and the Gumpos. Kathy ended her chat by telling us about wonderful local restaurants we should try.

**Don Voss** gave a thorough history lesson, which is covered in his article later in this issue. **Hank Bruno's** over-

view of the development of Callaway Gardens was accompanied by impressive views of the gardens in various seasons. The effect was rather like visiting the gardens ourselves, but with a very knowledgeable gardener at our side.

### Tours, Day 1

**Thursday, March 23** began bright and early with our trip to **Magnolia Plantation**, owned by one family, the Draytons, for over 300 years. Begun in 1676, this makes it the oldest major public garden in America. Located right on the Ashley River, this plantation was our first real introduction to why this area is called the "low country." While it is listed on the National Historic Register, the site is fully self-sufficient, receiving no governmental aid. Though we were not able to tour inside the historic home that day, there was something for everyone to enjoy, from a gift shop to a petting zoo with deer you could feed by hand and peacocks, including an all-white one. The 125-acre former rice field is now a waterfowl refuge, Audubon Swamp Garden, and is home to egrets, anhinga, and some alligators. You could view these close up and safely from a series of boardwalks, dikes, and bridges. The owners are pet lovers, and if you visit again you can bring your pet along on a leash if you'd like. The mature garden was such a sight from every angle, including a view from the large raised balcony that allowed us to see down onto mature camellias, azaleas, and wisteria and down several long allées. No wonder the family retained ownership of this garden even through some very tough years. The present owners are developing the gardens for color displays in all seasons (according to the very professional orientation video).

Next we traveled to stunning **Middleton Place**, another National Historic Landmark. The scale of this garden is hard to describe, but a few facts may help: The butterfly terraces that are the signature of the gardens

took 100 slaves 10 years to dig by hand. The plantation was settled in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century and came to Henry Middleton in 1741 by marriage. Four generations of Middletons were very active politically. Dating from the 1920s and 1930s, the Azalea Hillside Garden contains 35,000 azaleas, primarily of red Southern Indian varieties, with some deciduous representations. *R.* 'President Claeys' predominates. Added to these sheer numbers, imagine how it looks reflected in a lake dammed for the purpose at the base of the hillside. The typical 19<sup>th</sup> century formal garden had two reflecting pools, one formal and one informal, and exquisite collections of azaleas and camellias. In keeping with the age of the garden, grand old trees dominated, from the Middleton Oak, to magnolias, cypresses, mountain laurels, crepe myrtles, and giant live oaks. Middleton Place is justly proud of having achieved a 250 year-anniversary and celebrates it in souvenirs in their gift shop. Colonial activities and barnyard demonstrations round out the experience, complete with sheep grazing on the lawn. For the history-minded, you could tour the house and review all the history for a very reasonable price. The day was chilly, blustery, and gray, so it was a wonderful treat to have a lovely luncheon in their events pavilion. Definitely worth a return trip if you're in the area.

The final event on the way back to the hotel was a bus tour of **downtown Charleston**. The tour guide pointed out colonial churches, markets, and historical sights. The church steeples along the skyline have given the city the nickname, "The Holy City." Single houses were unique among the homes, being only one room wide and several rooms deep with two porches called piazzas. These were built to catch cool breezes during the long hot summers. We saw many architectural styles: colonial, antebellum, Victorian, and Art Deco. We stopped briefly to see Battery Park where artists were painting local mansions. Word is that some of these Victorians sell for \$1 to \$5 million now.

## Evening Speakers

**Jeff Beasley** of Transplant Nursery in Lavonia, Georgia, described some of his wild azalea finds at Tray Mountain, north of Helen, Georgia. Some of these will provide material for new hybrids. As second-generation nursery people, they have been working on crosses and selections of rhododendron, azaleas, and deciduous azaleas in their family for 20 years now. Their new series of "Maid in the Shade" cultivars has been released, and was listed in the September 1999 issue of **THE AZALEAN** (p.51). Their most notable azalea is *R. 'My Mary'* named for Jeff's mother who attended the conference.

**Fred Minch's** presentation on hybridizing involved the very able assistance of wife Jean in making his talk a fun family affair. Every enthusiast can relate to the "fun" of having their dining room table taken up with azalea seeds in various stages of drying and sorting. What an image that was!

**Maarten van der Giessen's** talk on commercial criteria for azalea evaluation dealt mainly with the need to get other hybrids beyond *R. 'Hino de Giri'*, *R. 'Hino Crimson'*, *R. 'Fashion'* and the like into the market and out to the public via local nurseries. He suggested hybrids such as those of Pete Vines and other newer introductions. One of Maarten's objectives is to get Satsuki-type flowers into early-blooming plants. Many in the audience agreed. There are few Satsuki in the U.S. trade at the moment. Another objective is to select for heat-tolerance for Zones 7-10, not cold hardiness in Zones 3-6. Successes in new introductions include the "Encore Series" bred by Buddy Lee and given top-class marketing by PDSI. A Glenn Dale, *R. 'Refrain'* does well. Some others he mentioned are *R. 'Sunglow'*, *R. 'Koromo Shikibu'*, *R. 'Orange Slipper'* (a sport of *R. 'Red Slipper'*), *R. 'Janet Rhea'* and other Linwoods, *R. 'Vibrant'*, *R. 'Marian Lee'*, *R. 'Zephyr'*, *R. 'Astronaut'*, *R. 'Red Ribbon'* (an Aromi hybrid), *R. 'Ambrosia'*, and *R.*

*'Saint Moritz'*. Bottom line, a lot of excellent hybridizing has been done, but marketing needs to be done to get these new introductions to the consumer.

## Tours, Day 2

**Friday, March 23** tours began with a most unusual garden, the result of a very political family's gift. Located at Monck's Corner, South Carolina, 3200 acres of land used to belong to Clare Booth Luce and her husband who used it as a weekend retreat. They donated the land to The Charleston diocese, which sold some and established **Mepkin Abbey** on the rest. Twenty-seven monks live a cloistered life in this beautiful setting overlooking a former rice field. Our guide was Brother Daniel, their business manager, and is the only member who leaves the property. The order is self-sufficient, raising 30,000 laying hens, whose eggs support the Abbey and whose manure the brothers compost and sell. The Abbey has a beautiful new chapel, a new senior's wing, and is adding a big new library. They occasionally accept visitors who wish to stay for meditation and reflection. One impressive area on a bluff overlooks the flooded rice field, a reflection pool, a hillside of azaleas and camellias, and towering live oaks. Future plans are to develop a botanic garden on the property. More about that venture as it develops.

The buses then took us to **Carolina Nurseries**, a huge commercial nursery and the largest in South Carolina. While the entire nursery is 700 acres, we toured parts of 280 acres of container-stock. They have 35 acres under shade and 541,000 square feet of saran-covered Quonset hut houses. They employ 40 salaried employees and 325 hourly ones. The production from this state-of-the art nursery is amazing: 11 million pieces of nursery stock, ranging from seedlings to 15-gallon container trees. They grow a full range of *Ilex*, junipers, and

broadleaved and herbaceous perennials destined for both Northern and Southern markets. Their shipping dock looks as big as a football field, and can load 24 semi-trailer loads at a time. They shipped 1,500 trailer loads of plants out in 1999 alone.

This nursery was a generous sponsor of our convention in 2000, including, but not limited to, the catered barbecue lunch with all the fixings they served us in their spotless new potting shed. It felt just like a family reunion, and we got to talk to many of the staff at Carolina. They also are the first nursery company to grow Aromi hybrids in any great numbers. Partners in the operation, Jay Guy and Linda Erdman, both brought plants to the plant auction Friday night.

We saw Kathy Woolsey again at 175-acre **Cypress Gardens**, once the site of a rice plantation and now a huge black-water swamp. Begun by Benjamin R. Kittredge in the late 1920s, it now has 100 acres of garden, a butterfly house, conference facilities, gift shop, an aquarium, and picnic shelters. There are miles of walking paths and trails and many old favorite cultivars perched right along the edge of the cypress swamp. Special garden areas include the Wedding Garden, Camellia Garden, Garden of Memories, and Woodland Gardens. Kathy led a few tours and made everyone welcome to take cuttings. She explained that Hurricane Hugo hit the area hard, and that Cypress Gardens lost many trees, which has caused problems with camellias that need a little shade. The staff is still replanting trees and azaleas. One azalea is named for the garden, *R. 'Duchess of Cypress'*, rather like a pale *R. 'George Lindley Taber'* with occasional streaks of lavender and lavender spots; she has spectacular fall bloom. Some members enjoyed the chance to go canoeing among the bald cypress knees.

The final tour of the day was a professionally guided tour of **Summerville**, so named because it used to be the preferred location of

summer homes for Charlestonians who wanted to get away from the humid banks of the Ashley and Cooper Rivers. Begun in 1830, it grew into a Victorian village made popular by physicians of the time who recommended it for its "beneficial pine air." Our timing for our visit was perfect, because the entire town of very historic cottages and mansions seemed swathed in Southern Indicas of fuchsia and purple.

The evening banquet was a gala affair, finished off by one last talk, by **Barbara Stump**, describing a new garden's development project. All this fun and the slide show made the annual meeting a bit late. However, the entire crowd was more than happy to

give Bob and Bee Hobbs a standing ovation for their tireless support of the Society and their 10 years of work as editors of **THE AZALEAN**. They were really surprised to receive the commemorative case clock, presented by Jim Thornton. (See minutes in the Society News section later in this issue.)

All in all, the two days were a real whirlwind of azalea sights and history. Rather like an illustrated tour of Don Voss's talk: The area around Charleston was where some of the first azaleas came to America, and we got to see that those very gardens are still being well cared for today. And we can testify that today's growers are doing their best to continue that tradition.

Thanks again to all the folks who made this convention a wonderful event! Thanks to Mr. Drayton F. Hastie of Magnolia Plantation for his generosity and support; to Cypress Gardens and Kathy Woolsey for their support; to Jay Guy and Linda Erdman of Carolina Nursery for arranging the tour and wonderful lunch; and thanks to the speakers. A special thanks to the organizers from Louisiana and Alabama: Bill Bode, Buddy and Dixie Lee, June and Jerry Ladner, Billy Lucas, Maarten van der Giessen, James Campbell, and Vince Ciolino.

## How Azaleas Came to Our Gardens: A Snapshot

Donald H. Voss — Vienna, Virginia

Those who read **THE AZALEAN** can rest easy—this will not be one of my excursions into the rules of plant nomenclature. But because deciduous and evergreen azaleas came to our gardens by quite different paths, we must first distinguish between them. In addition, the terms "species," "hybrid," and "cultivar" require brief comment.

### Distinguishing Deciduous and Evergreen Azaleas

When the plants are in bloom, differences between deciduous and evergreen azaleas are apparent in flower form, color, and bud morphology. In the deciduous azaleas, the corolla tube is usually prominent and expands more or less abruptly into the limb. Corolla hues may be white, yellow, orange, yellowish pink, red, pink, purple, purplish pink—often in combination. Because of the presence of carotene pigmentation, these yellows and oranges tend to be high in chroma (i.e., saturation or "purity" of color). Examples are *R.* 'Windsor Buttercup' and *R.* 'Orangeade'. An important fea-

ture of the deciduous azaleas is that the terminal bud produces only flowers.

In the evergreen azaleas, the corolla usually flares from the receptacle into more or less widely spreading lobes—a form often called "funnel-shaped." The hue range is narrower than that in the deciduous azaleas, because carotenoid pigmentation is not present. The slight coloration from yellowish pigmentation present in many white azaleas is usually so low in chroma as to be visually indiscernible. Yellowish pinks (coral or salmon if you prefer), reds, pinks, purples, and purplish pinks are common in the evergreen azaleas. In the evergreen azaleas, a terminal bud produces both flowers and new vegetative growth.

With respect to foliage, both the evergreen and deciduous azaleas leaf out in the spring and drop leaves in the fall or early winter. In the evergreen azaleas, however, a second flush of growth produces the so-called summer leaves, as well as terminal buds that will produce flowers and vegetative growth in the following spring.

The summer leaves persist through the winter and usually drop when new growth develops in the spring.

As a result of their respective cycles of leaf growth and leaf drop, the deciduous azaleas are bare of foliage in winter, while evergreen azaleas have some leaves. Though leafless, the deciduous azaleas' branches and fat buds often add a grace note to the winter landscape—one especially attractive when highlighted with snow. The evergreen azaleas carry their relatively small green (or, in some cases, rich dark red or purplish red) summer leaves through the winter but do not appear as dense as in summer when clothed with the larger spring leaves.

### "Species," "Cultivars," and "Hybrids"

Botanists continue to argue about what constitutes a species. "Species" are usually, but not always, defined with respect to plants growing in the wild. The species is the basic unit in plant classification and is designated by a Latin epithet. We need only note

here (quoting Cronquist's definition) that "species are the smallest group that are consistently and persistently distinct, and distinguishable by ordinary means." We thus have sets of plants known as *Rhododendron calendulaceum*, *R. indicum*, *R. kaempferi*, etc.

Many if not most horticultural varieties are designated under a system of nomenclature different from that of the botanists. Minor differences (in color or form, for example) that lead growers to name new varieties—and spur collectors to acquire them—are often considered by the botanist as falling within the range of variation of a single botanical taxon. To deal with this situation, a system for naming cultivated varieties of plants was created. Now a distinguishable cultivated plant is called a "cultivar" and is given a name in a modern language. A cultivar may be a selection from wild material, a hybrid, or—in the brave new world of the millennium that begins January 1, 2001—the result of genetic engineering.

A hybrid may be created by applying pollen from a plant of one clone to the stigma of a plant of another clone. The resulting seed, seedlings, and plants will carry genetic material from both parents. This process is usually undertaken to select and combine desired characteristics found in the parents—cold tolerance; heat tolerance; flower form, color, color patterns, fragrance; foliage size, shape, color, denseness; and plant habit.

### Where Did Azaleas Originate?

We won't run through the provenance of the 111 species shown in the table. (That number includes the new North American deciduous species *R. eastmanii*, published in 1999 by Kron and Creel.) First, note that azaleas are Northern Hemisphere plants with temperature regimes mostly ranging from hot summer, mild winter (U.S. Gulf Coast, East China Coast, Taiwan) to hot summer, cold winter (southern New England, Japan, South Korea).

Most of the deciduous azaleas are native to North America. The range of *R. occidentale* in the wild is California and southwest Oregon. The other North American species are primarily eastern, some distributed widely, some narrowly. For example, *R. viscosum* (in which Kron now includes *R. oblongifolium* and *R. serrulatum*) is found in the coastal plain and piedmont from Massachusetts to central Florida, western North Carolina and the Great Smoky Mountains area, across the Gulf Coast, and up into Arkansas.

*R. calendulaceum* is found in the Appalachians from Pennsylvania to northern Georgia. An example of narrow distribution is *R. austrinum*, found along the Gulf Coast from southwestern Georgia and the Florida panhandle to southeastern Mississippi. Even narrower is the area for *R.*

*prunifolium*, limited to the southern half of the Georgia-Alabama border area.

*R. luteum* is found in the Pontic region (eastern Turkey along the Black Sea, the eastern Caucasus) and in a few locations in Ukraine and eastern Europe as far north as Poland.

While the deciduous azaleas are pre-



The main bridge at Magnolia Plantation is surely one of the most photogenic bridges in the world, connecting magnificent azalea collections among Spanish moss-laden live oaks.

dominantly North American, the evergreen azaleas are all from the Far East. The large number of species in China may in part reflect a propensity of Chinese botanists to be "splitters." *R. molle* subsp. *molle* is concentrated in China's central east-coast area, with widely scattered populations to the south and west. *R. molle* subsp. *japonicum* is native to Japan, widely distributed from Hokkaido through Honshu to Kyushu. *R. oldhamii*, a plant well known to one of our leading contemporary hybridizers, is native to Taiwan. *R. simsii*, found in China, mostly south of the Yangtze River and concentrated in the southeast, became an important parent in many of the early evergreen azalea hybrids developed in Europe.

*R. yedoense* var. *poukhanense* is from South Korea. In Japan, *R. kaempferi* is widely distributed from Hokkaido through Honshu and Shikoku to Kyushu. *R. indicum* is found mainly

### Geographic Origin of Azalea Species (Number of species, by subgenus)

Origin	<i>Pentanthera</i>	<i>Tsutsusi</i>
China, incl. Taiwan	1	53
Japan	5	27
Other Asia	1	7
Norht America	16	—
Europe / Near East	1	—

in central Honshu. *R. ripense*, a presumed parent of the putative hybrid cultivar 'Mucronatum', is native to southern Honshu, Shikoku, and northern Kyushu. In nature, some are limited to southern areas: *R. eriocarpum* (Kyushu, Ryukyu Islands) and *R. kiusianum* (Kyushu).

#### Evergreen Azaleas—Journeying to the West

For an audience in Charleston, South Carolina, it is appropriate to deviate from chronology and begin our discussion of the travels of azaleas about 1848. At that time, the Reverend John Drayton, who was the master of Magnolia Plantation, introduced *Rhododendron indicum* and *Camellia japonica* into his rapidly expanding garden. In his book, *Carolina Gardens* [1939], Shaffer states:

His choice was happy—an inspiration that was to light here on earth a look of heaven. Travelers declare that these two exotic plants flourish today at Magnolia in even greater luxuriance than in their native regions of the Far East. Reverend Drayton, when an old man, was visiting the wonderful Kew gardens whose azaleas are the pride of London. There he saw a notice that azaleas in their greatest perfection were to be found at the Magnolia garden in South Carolina.

Having paid due homage to the Reverend Drayton's good judgment in selection of exotic plant material, we turn to some general observations on the "travels" of deciduous and evergreen azaleas.

With respect to the evergreen azaleas, we are indebted to Japan (at first indirectly) for most of the varieties represented in our gardens today. In his introduction to *A Brocade Pillow* (the translation of a 1692 Japanese book on azaleas), John Creech observed:

One can only be awed by the sophisticated level of azalea culture that existed in the Edo period (1615-1867). It is doubtful that there are any objectives pursued by modern azalea breeders that were not taken into consideration by these pioneer azalea developers, who produced selections that have not been duplicated since. *Curiously, it was only the simpler forms of these azaleas that reached Europe during the centuries following the appearance of A Brocade Pillow* [emphasis added]. Some azaleas did make their way to Europe during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to become the basis of the Belgian forcing azaleas, which were later introduced to America, where they became known as the "Southern Indica" azaleas. It was not until the twentieth century that Kurume azaleas were introduced to the West, and satsuki azaleas did not reach the United States until Benjamin Y. Morrison of the USDA acquired a collection in 1938 and 1939 . . .

Almost nothing is known about the movement of azaleas between China and Japan before Western plant collectors went to eastern Asia. It is probable that Buddhist priests traveling between these areas occasionally took with them seeds and plants of favorite ornamentals. Revelation to the West of the Orient's rich store of ornamental plants was a byproduct of European traders' search for economical access to the spices and—of course, for the English—tea from the Orient.

The key that opened the entire Far East to economic exploitation was Vasco da Gama's voyage from Portugal, around the Cape of Good Hope, to India in 1497-98. Portugal dominated the Indian Ocean and waters around Malaysia for a time, but soon was challenged by Spain and, later, by England and Holland.

Around 1600, both the English East India Company and the Dutch East

India Company were formed. In the following two-and-one-half centuries, the dispatch of seeds and plants from China and Japan to the West was accomplished to a great extent by doctors and commercial officials assigned to the trading posts and consulates, as well as by missionaries.

At first, plants from China (which included some Japanese plants found in Chinese gardens) reached the West via English collectors; plants from Japan, via Dutch collectors. Until the 1860s, the Chinese and Japanese azaleas that reached the West were plants from gardens and nurseries, shipped mainly from Canton, Shanghai, and—for plants from Japan—Batavia on Java.

The export of plants from Japan was difficult. A Portuguese explorer found Japan in 1542, and in 1549 St. Francis Xavier introduced Christianity there. As the newly introduced religion acquired converts, it became increasingly alarming to the politico-military rulers and the Buddhist priests. In 1624, Christianity was proscribed, and Japan was closed to foreigners, except for Chinese and Dutch traders.

Around 1640, the Dutch traders were confined to a small islet, Deshima, in Nagasaki harbor. Access was restricted for two centuries, until Commodore Perry's 1853-54 expedition led to an opening of commerce.

After establishing dominance in the East Indies, the Dutch chose Batavia (Jakarta), Java, as their administrative center there. A botanical garden at Batavia became an early center for the study and classification of plant material from Japan, as well as a primary way station for shipment of Japanese plant material to Holland. The botanical and horticultural worlds benefited immeasurably from the activities of three doctors attached to the Dutch East India Company. (They not only provided descriptions and illustrations of the Japanese flora but also managed—in the best tradition of illicit acquisition of plant material—to

evade Japanese restrictions and to send plant material to Batavia and to Holland.)

Initially, the interest was mainly scientific—the description, classification, and illustration of the Japanese flora. Engelbert Kaempfer, a German doctor, was employed at the Dutch trading post on Deshima during 1690-92. In 1712 he published his *Amoenitates Exoticae*, an illustrated account of his travels in Japan. Included were descriptions of more than 200 species of plants. According to E.H. Wilson, Kaempfer described 21 Japanese azaleas.

According to Stearn, the Japanese considered Kaempfer's interest in plants "natural for a physician, many medicaments being of vegetable origin, and they brought him specimens of many plants cultivated or growing wild around Nagasaki." As a doctor, Kaempfer was accorded more respect than his colleagues, who as merchants were near the bottom of the Japanese social order. The Dutch on Deshima were required to travel annually to Edo (Tokyo) along with the local lords to pay homage to the Shogun. Stearn states: "At the Shogun's court he [Kaempfer] was treated as a clown, having to dance and sing, but physicians sought his advice."

Carl Peter Thunberg, a Swedish doctor and protégé of Linnaeus, went to Japan in 1775 and published his *Flora Japonica* in 1784. While in Japan, he was able to obtain seeds and living plants to send to Holland. Later, in 1823-29, Philipp von Siebold, a German doctor, was stationed at Deshima. He managed to acquire and send to the Netherlands a collection of almost 500 different plants, which he grew in a nursery—first at Ghent then at Leiden. Von Siebold published a *Flora Japonica* and was responsible for introduction of many Japanese plants in the West.

Meanwhile, in the late 1600s the English East India Company established facilities at Amoy and Canton. Many

plants from Chinese gardens were sent through these ports to India during the 1700s and to England in the early 1800s. One of the most horticulturally significant of these plants was *R. simsii* Planchon, which arrived in England from China on an English East India Company ship around 1810 (or 1806, depending on whom you choose to believe).

Later, French missionaries became active in plant exploration in China. David, Delavay, and Farges are among those whose names appear as specific epithets on various ornamentals. Many of their collections were sent to France to be classified and named by Planchon at Montpellier and, later, by Franchet at the Natural History Museum in Paris.

Several of the evergreen azaleas that reached the West in the first half of the nineteenth century are of special significance in ornamental horticulture:

- *R. simsii* Planchon (Upper Burma, China [widespread], Taiwan, Laos, Thailand, Ryukyu Islands): grown near London in 1812 and in Paris in 1822; the plant was cultivated in Dorchester, Massachusetts, in 1837. E. H. Wilson states that *R. simsii* remained rare in the West for several decades, but adds that "The so-called 'Indian Azaleas' of western gardens have been originated almost entirely from *R. Simsii* since about 1850, chiefly in Belgium, but some in France and others in Germany."
- *R. 'Mucronatum'* (Japan, only known in cultivation, possibly a hybrid of *R. ripense* and *R. stenopetalum*; specimens in China and Java): this Japanese plant, also widely known from Chinese gardens, reached Holland from Deshima via Batavia. Kaempfer described it in 1712, Blume used the specific epithet *mucronatum* at Batavia in 1823, and Lindley in 1824 described and named (as *Azalea indica alba*) a plant sent to England from China in 1819. *R.*

'*Mucronatum*' was imported into what is now Belgium in 1825, and the cultivar was growing in a garden at Watertown, Massachusetts, in 1838.

- *R. indicum* (L.) Sweet (Japan; specimens in China and Java): appears to have reached Holland from Deshima via Batavia on Dutch East India Company ships in the 1680s. This is the species that Linnaeus included in *Species Plantarum* (1753) as *Azalea indica*. It was introduced in England in 1833, with some color forms brought from China on English East India Company ships. Two varieties were introduced from England into Boston, Massachusetts, in 1838. According to E. H. Wilson, the true *R. indicum* largely dropped from cultivation (because it could not be forced to bloom out of season in greenhouse culture) and the name was loosely applied to *R. simsii* for some time after 1850.

After the mid-1800s, the flow of plants from China was increasingly in the hands of collectors working on behalf of nurserymen. Many garden forms were soon in English gardens. At first, azaleas from the Orient were considered to be tender and suitable only for greenhouse culture. *R. 'Phoeniceum'* was widely used as rootstock onto which so-called "Indian Azaleas" were grafted.

One of the great collectors was British plantsman Robert Fortune, whose collecting trips in China occurred between 1843 and 1861. Notable among Fortune's azalea introductions are:

- R. kiusianum* Makino 'Amoenum'
- R. 'Vittatum'* (white with lilac-purple stripes)
- R. 'Bealii'* (white with red stripes)
- R. 'Narcissiflorum'* (a double form of *R. 'Mucronatum'*)

The well-known cultivar 'Amoenum' was sent to England from China by Fortune around 1850 and was introduced into the Boston, Massachusetts, area in 1855. *R. kiusianum* (including var. *sataense*), from Japan's is-

land of Kyushu, is a major component in the genetic makeup of the "Kurume Azaleas."

According to E. H. Wilson—whose collecting trips in China and Japan between 1899 and 1918 gave Western horticulture hundreds of new ornamentals—'Vittatum' and 'Bealii' gave rise to new forms and "may be said to have initiated an industry which has resulted in the so-called race of "Indian Azaleas." (E.H. Wilson considered 'Vittatum' and 'Bealii' to be infraspecific taxa in *R. simsii*, but taxonomists today list them as cultivars of indeterminate origin.) 'Vittatum' was the seed parent of 71 of the Glenn Dale azaleas.

Although commerce with Japan had opened to the West after 1854, introduction of azaleas from Japan proceeded slowly. *R. kaempferi* Planchon (Japan), one of the most widely distributed azalea species in Japan, was described by Kaempfer in 1712 but did not receive a proper Latin binomial until Planchon named it in 1854. The Russian botanist Maximovich studied the wild flora in Japan during the early 1860s and sent seed of several azalea species to the botanical garden at St. Petersburg. But not until 1892 was *R. kaempferi* introduced to western horticulture by Prof. C. S. Sargent, who sent seeds from Japan to Arnold Arboretum.

After 1900, the pace of introductions accelerated rapidly. A Japanese nurseryman, Akashi, won a gold medal for an exhibit of a dozen varieties of Kurume azaleas at the 1915 Panama-Pacific Exposition in San Francisco. A California nursery, Domoto Brothers, purchased some of Akashi's plants and subsequently, between 1917 and 1920, imported large numbers of Kurume azaleas. Many of these were sold to East Coast nurseries. Unfortunately these nurseries substituted English names for the Japanese names of the plants, and the documentation of the changes was lost.

Another major introduction was "Wilson's Fifty," a group of Kurume azaleas selected by E. H. Wilson from the Akashi nursery. These reached the Arnold Arboretum in early 1919. In listing the names, Wilson (1921) stated:

The names are those of the originator, Akashi, and therefore authentic. The plants will be propagated and distributed under these names and, owing to the reprehensible habit of changing names by Japanese nurserymen, will probably remain the only set with standard names in existence.

Thus we see that the long and inglorious tradition of name changing (often for monetary gain) is not unique to the western world.

A group of evergreen azaleas, selected by R. K. Beattie of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (U.S.D.A.), was introduced in 1929. Later, in 1938-39, the U.S.D.A. imported 53 varieties of Satsuki azaleas selected by B. Y. Morrison from the catalog of the Chugai Nursery of Kobe, Japan. In the late 1970s,



One of the Southern Indicas, seen in profusion on the Azalea Hillside at Middleton Place and at Cypress Gardens.

U.S.D.A. imported a large number of Kurume azaleas selected during trips to Japan led by John Creech.

As to hybrid groups in the evergreen azaleas, it would probably take all night to list them: the number of named cultivars is well over 7,000. This number reflects a great diversity (some good, some bad) of plant characteristics that have resulted from species selections and extensive hybridization. Some hybridizers have been content to attain a narrowly defined objective and name just a few plants. Others have pursued a broader spectrum of objectives and named many more. The leader in this regard must be B. Y. Morrison, who named the 454 Glenn Dale azaleas and over 50 Back Acres.

#### Deciduous Azaleas — East Meets West

Hybridization of deciduous azaleas brought together the native azaleas of North America, Eastern Europe, China, and Japan to produce plants with showier flowers than those of the species. For some observers, the simple beauty of the native azaleas has strong appeal. But most find irresistible the smorgasbord of rich colors and inflorescence forms of the Ghent, Mollis, Knap Hill, Exbury and later hybrid groups.



These flowers are from *R. 'Vittatum'* at the Glenn Dale, Maryland, Plant Introduction Station of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. 'Vittatum' was the seed parent for 71 of B.Y. Morrison's Glenn Dale azaleas. [Photo by William C. Miller III.]

By the early 1800s, the North American *R. calendulaceum*, *canescens*, *flammeum*, *periclymenoides*, *prino-phyllum*, and *viscosum* had reached Europe. The beginning of the hybrid saga is attributed to one Mortier, a baker in Ghent. In 1825, he began crossing North American species with the native azalea of the Pontic region and eastern Europe, *R. luteum*. These crosses, at first called "Mortieri" azaleas, are now known as Ghent hybrids. In 1831, an Edinburgh journal reported that interspecific azalea hybrids had been raised at the Highclere garden of the Earl of Carnarvon, but it was the Belgian plants that achieved wide distribution in the nursery trade.



This photo gives just a glimmer of what it was like to walk through the Azalea Hillside garden at Middleton Place. Planted in the 1920s and the 1930s the 35,000 azaleas have been maintained and rejuvenated to continue to make a wonderful color display.

In the latter half of the nineteenth century, English nurserymen, the Waterers, crossed *R. molle* subsp. *molle* with *R. calendulaceum*. Only one cultivar, *R. 'Nancy Waterer'*, was named. Much later, in the 1920s, Lionel de Rothschild acquired some of the Waterer plants, and these entered into the hybridization program that gave us the Exbury azaleas. After the death of the younger Waterer in 1924, many of the Knap Hill seedlings were acquired and developed further by several English nurseries.

Around 1900, the Japanese *R. molle* subsp. *japonicum* (synonym:

*R. japonicum* (A.Gray) J.V. Suringar) was crossed with *R. luteum*, the Pontic azalea, by Koster; it also appeared in the Mollis hybrids, crosses between selections of the Chinese and Japanese subspecies of *R. molle* [*R. molle* subsp. *japonicum* and *R. (molle* subsp. *japonicum* × *molle* subsp. *molle*)]. The western North American azalea, *R. occidentale*, entered the deciduous hybrid picture in the late 1800s. The Koster hybrids of *R. occidentale* × *R. (molle* subsp. *japonicum* × *molle* subsp. *molle*) became known as Occidentale hybrids.

While many of the original cultivars in the deciduous azalea hybrid groups are no longer available, new ones keep appearing. Some of the new plants can be grouped under the older categories; for example, Knap Hill azaleas in the broad sense may include plants hybridized at Knap Hill, Exbury, Slocock Nursery, Windsor Park, and Ilam in New Zealand.

In the United States, development of deciduous azaleas has proceeded in many geographic regions. Thus (in an illustrative, not exhaustive listing),



Cypress Gardens Horticulturist Kathy Woolsey shows Helene Goodman lovely azaleas perfect for taking cuttings. Behind them, *R. 'Duchess of Cypress'* shows how big mature Southern Indicas can become.



And each night we were a rapt audience listening to our peers regale us about lore, propagation, and gardens.

from the Northwest come selections and hybrids by the Bovees, Slonecker, Arneson, and others; from Minnesota (of all places), the Northern Lights series; from Ohio, Girard and Leach; from Vermont (again "of all places"), Abbot hybrids; from Massachusetts, Weston hybrids; from southeastern New York, Carlson hybrids; from Virginia, Don Hyatt's 'Yellow Cloud'; from Georgia, Galle and the Beasleys; and from southern Alabama, the "Confederate Series" that Society members saw on their 1999 visit to the Dodd & Dodd nursery.

When you walk among the azaleas in your gardens, reflect on their origins—they are a microcosm not only representative of one form of plant life from the temperate regions of the Northern Hemisphere but also a reminder of intrepid collectors in hostile environments and the nurserymen and hybridizers whose interest and devotion have made possible today's rich array of offerings in subgenera *Pentanthera* and *Tsutsusi* of genus *Rhododendron*—the AZALEAS!

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**Donald H. Voss** is an economist by training, and an active gardener with a scholarly interest in azaleas and rhododendrons. He is an expert on the azaleas of Robert Gartrell (Robin Hill hybrids) and is a former chairman of the Society's Board of Directors and former keeper of the Society's database. Don currently volunteers at the herbarium of the U.S. National Arboretum.

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# Research Notes

## Azaleas Resistant to Lace Bugs

[Contributed by Oconee Chapter Newsletter, Ed.]

The azalea lace bug, *Stephanitis pyrioides*, is an important pest of azaleas. Scientists Y. Wang, C. Robacker, and S.K. Braman at the Department of Horticulture, University of Georgia, Georgia Station, Griffin, Georgia reported on their research in the 1998 *Journal of the American Society of Horticultural Science* (123: 592-596). Seventeen deciduous azaleas, or their cultivars, were evaluated for their susceptibility to lace bug damage. Factors evaluated were oviposition rate, percentage of emergence from the egg, feeding damage, and nymphal growth rate. In order of resistance, *Rhododendron canescens* and *R. periclymenoides* led, followed by *R. prunifolium*. *R. viscosum* (including *R. oblongifolium* and *R. serrulatum* strains) and *R. alabamense*, *R. 'My Mary'*, and *R. 'Buttercup'* were most susceptible.

A subsequent study published in the 1999 *Journal of the American Society of Horticultural Science* (124: 239-244) by these scientists suggested that resistance may be due to a lesser amount of, or absence of, attractants and stimulants for feeding and oviposition on the plant's surface.

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Further Word on *R. 'Millie Mac'*  
Donald H. Voss—Vienna, Virginia

After reading " 'Millie Mac' Misbehaves" in **THE AZALEAN** for June 2000, American Rhododendron Society Plant Names Registrar Jay Murray checked the registration application for *R. 'Millie Mac'*. It states that the cultivar originated as a mutant branch discovered in 1966 on a plant of *R. austrinum* collected in the wild in Escambia County, Alabama, in 1950. The name was registered in 1977 by F.T. McConnell.

In a note to me, Jay enclosed a copy (print from a digital scan) of a photograph that accompanied the registration application. This print shows the inflorescence of *R. 'Millie Mac'* and, held below it, an inflorescence from the plant on which the 'Millie Mac' mutation was discovered in 1966. In the print, the corolla lobes of the original plant appear to be a strong yellow or strong orange yellow with orange yellow spotting or blotch; the buds are a moderate reddish orange. The 1999 "misbehavior" of my *R. 'Millie Mac'* resulted, however, in white corollas with a yellow blotch in the upper lobe (see Photo 2 in the June 2000 article). The failure of the 1999 mutation to produce the typical yellow corollas of the original plant tends to confirm that the original plant is *R. austrinum* x *R. canescens* rather than pure *R. austrinum*.

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# Azalea Gardens

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## Auburn University Azalea Evaluation — An Update

*Dr. Gary Keever — Auburn, Alabama*

In the September 1999 issue of **THE AZALEAN**, a new cultivar evaluation project at Auburn University was profiled. At that time cuttings of cultivars of Robin Hill, Huang, Holly Springs, and Back Acres azaleas obtained from Maarten van der Giessen and Wanda and Charles Hanners had been propagated. Rooted cuttings were overwintered at the Ornamental Substation in Mobile and were repotted into gallon pots in spring 2000. Plants will be grown under full-sun nursery conditions until January 2001 at which time most plants of each cultivar will be planted in irrigated, raised beds in central Alabama. The remaining plants of each cultivar will be grown a second spring at the substation to evaluate flowering, growth habit, and leaf characteristics under nursery conditions.

We currently have a full set of Robin Hill, 80 Huang, 57 Holly Springs, and 32 Back Acres cultivars in production and would like to expand our collection. If Society members have rooted

cuttings or liners of cultivars not in the evaluation, we would love to obtain some. Ideally, 12 plants of each are needed and could be mailed to:

Ornamental Horticulture  
Substation  
411 North McGregor Ave.  
Mobile, AL 36689-0276

Un-rooted cuttings (20-24 each) are also appreciated, but will be slower to introduce into the evaluation. Plants should be well watered before securely packing and shipping on a Monday or Tuesday to ensure arrival before the weekend. Un-rooted cuttings should be collected early in the day, wrapped in moist paper towels and placed in plastic bags.

As a part of this ongoing evaluation, we plan to add at least one new group of plants yearly. In 2000, we decided to work with the Satsuki. After numerous calls and conversations to arrange collecting trips, we decided to buy plants of about 190 cultivars from

Nuccio's Nurseries, Altadena, California. We will soon propagate from these to have sufficient numbers to evaluate. As in 1999, we are also relying on the generous donation of time and cuttings from Charles and Wanda Hanners and Maarten van der Giessen, without whom our evaluation would be much less complete.

Research at the Mobile Ornamental Horticulture Substation primarily supports the commercial container nursery industry. For more information on what the azalea evaluation project needs, call Mr. John Olive, superintendent of the Ornamental Horticulture Substation in Mobile, Alabama, at 334-342-2366.

*Dr. Keever has been a teacher of landscape design and researcher at Auburn University for 17 years. Research has focused on plant growth regulation of woody and herbaceous landscape plants, and plant evaluations. John Olive is a plant pathologist by training and has been in Mobile for 11 years.*

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## Ben Morrison Chapter Supports Development of a Native Azalea Garden at London Town

*Bob Hobbs — North Beach, Maryland*

The Ben Morrison Chapter has made a donation of \$500 to the London Town Gardens to support the development of a native azalea garden. London Town Gardens is located within the once-thriving port of London on the South River near Annapolis, Maryland. London was established in 1683, and by 1730 was a major tobacco exporting center and the site of the southern terminus for the South River Ferry to Annapolis. By the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, however, London had, for all practical purposes disappeared, except for the Ferry Master's House, a large brick mansion. Anne Arundel County acquired

the property in the 1820s, and converted the mansion into an almshouse, which it remained until 1965. At that time, one group of volunteers began to restore the mansion (which was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1973), and another group worked to create a beautiful woodland garden. Today, the Historic London Town and Gardens is jointly maintained by Anne Arundel County, the London Town Foundation, and London Town Volunteers.

The garden consists of "gardens within gardens", and includes the Hosta Garden; the Azalea Glade; a

Colonial Kitchen Garden, a garden of plants with medicinal value; and several others. The plant collections include one of the most extensive selections of magnolias on the East Coast, an array of tree peonies, and 10,000 daffodils. The visitor's center meeting room has been the site of Ben Morrison Chapter azalea shows and sales in past years, and has been the site of the Ben Morrison Chapter winter meeting in 1999 and 2000. The Ben Morrison Chapter also provides a subscription to **THE AZALEAN** to London Town Gardens.

*continued on page 64*

This year, London Town Gardens has added a garden of native azaleas with monetary support from the Ben Morrison Chapter. The garden — supported by a partnership comprised of friends and family of a longtime London Town volunteer, Joan Heineck— has been planned by London Town Director of Horticultural Programs, Mollie Rideout, who also planted it May 26. So far the native azalea species *R. calendulaceum*, *R. atlanticum*, *R. vaseyi*, *R. periclymenoides*, *R. viscosum*, and *R. prinophyllum* have been planted. Companion plants include *R. maximum*, *Aesculus parviflora* (bottlebrush buckeye) and native plants that were originally on the site of the new garden.

Historic London Town and Gardens is open Monday-Saturday 10-4 and Sunday 12-4. Admission is charged unless one becomes a member.



The photograph above shows Ben Morrison chapter representative Bob Hobbs symbolically presenting a plant to London Town Director Dr. Gregg Stiverson and Mollie Ridout. [Photograph by J. Henso, courtesy of the Annapolis Evening Capital newspaper.]



Jim Thornton reads a special commendation to Bob and Bee Hobbs, thanking them on behalf of the Society for their ten years of superb editing of THE AZALEAN.



After a year of rooting and growing on cuttings, the Auburn University Azalea Evaluation Project is off to a great start as a research facility. [Photo courtesy of John Olive.]



At Mepkin Abbey, this lovely stairway between South Carolina palmettos leads to a path across a finger of the old rice-growing pools and on up to a hillside of azaleas and camellias.



As seen here at Magnolia Plantation, water was used to great effect to reflect the color of azaleas grown right to the edges of rivers or swamps in all the great South Carolina gardens we visited.

# Society News

## Ben Morrison Chapter Exceptional Service Award

In December 1999, the Ben Morrison Chapter presented both Sue and George Switzer with Certificates of Recognition of Exceptional Contributions to the Ben Morrison Chapter.

The citations read as follows:

Sue Switzer, a charter member of the Chapter has for many years served the Chapter as President, gracious hostess, and in support of other activities. She

has supported the objective of the Society to promote interest and exchange of knowledge of the azalea and to study the principles of hybridization, propagation, culture and care of azaleas. She has served the Society as a key member of the team that developed the George Harding Memorial Garden.

George S. Switzer, a charter member of the Chapter, has for many years served the Chapter as President and

supporter of meetings and other activities. He has supported the objective of the Society to promote interest and exchange of knowledge of the azaleas and to study the principles of hybridization, propagation, culture and care of azaleas. He has served the Society as a Director, Assistant Editor of **THE AZALEAN**, and as a key member of the team that developed the George Harding Memorial Garden.

## Annual Business Meeting Minutes

Charleston, South Carolina — March 24, 2000

The business meeting was brief, since it followed both the banquet and the speaker. President Bill Bode summarized the work of the Board of Directors meeting March 22.

**Old Business.** After work by Treasurer Bob Stelloh, the board could recommend that the Society could accept credit cards (at its website, only) as payment for dues or renewals. Bill McIntosh so moved, seconded by Art Vance. There was no discussion; the motion passed.

Regarding the election of directors, this will be delayed pending publication of a slate by the Nominating Committee. The terms of directors Lee and van der Giessen ended as of this meeting. Mr. Schroeder's position from Tri-State is open, but John Migas is serving out this term. Based on Bode's recommendation, Art Vance moved that in 2001 the Society vote for the whole slate, President, Vice-president, Secretary, Treasurer, and Jim Thornton seconded the motion. Discussion clarified that the terms of Lee, van der Giessen, and Migas would end in 2002, a scheme that was instituted when the Society began. The motion passed.

Former President Jim Thornton requested a point of personal privilege to make a special presentation to Dr. Robert and Bee Hobbs who retired from their 10-year tenure as the Editors of **THE AZALEAN** in 1998 but were unable to attend that convention. He

proudly presented them with a beautiful case clock in recognition of their service from 1988-1998. Bob Hobbs thanked everyone who had provided articles and recognized the support he and Bee had gotten from Jane Newman, Don Voss, Bill Miller, and in the early days, George Switzer. They all worked really hard to get **THE AZALEAN** right. Without their help he and Bee could not have been able to do the job. Thanks also to Brookside Gardens chapter's funding of their training in use of PageMaker software. These remarks were met with a standing ovation for Bob and Bee.

**New Business.** Barbara Stump, the current editor of **THE AZALEAN**, presented the Award for Best Article in 1999. She said that there had been such a close vote that two awards were being made. Donald H. Voss won one for his article "The Growth Cycle of the Evergreen Azaleas" from the December issue, and Tom Dodd III won one for his article "Breeding and Propagating Native Azaleas" from the September issue.

Bob Stelloh announced plans for the 2001 convention to be held in Asheville, North Carolina, June 14-17. Watch for more information on this "Fun in the Mountains with Native Azaleas" conference in **THE AZALEAN** and at the Society's website.

Bob Stelloh also reported progress on the website: new features include a searchable membership Roster and a

garden data index, which you can use to upload your own garden pictures. Join the e-mail forum; 125 people currently subscribe to this free service, of whom 85 are Society members. In the total Society, 229 members have e-mail. When asked what the Society was doing to encourage membership via this means, he responded that we have posted an online membership application on the website.

Bill McDavitt asked how many members had taken advantage of the multiple-year membership option and was told that 50 have to date. It was suggested that mailing labels on **THE AZALEAN** should carry the membership expiration date.

Bill Miller reported on his work to increase membership through production of an updated membership application brochure indicating new information such as the website address. Copies of the new brochures were mailed to chapters and supporting nurseries which had agreed to distribute the brochures. Bob Hobbs suggested that members should each take a few brochures to their local garden centers where they buy their azaleas to continue the distribution process. As President Bode has said before, we are all ambassadors for the ASA.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Barbara Stump

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# Chapter News

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## Ben Morrison Chapter

*[This entry has been compiled from several sources. The new chapter President's Message is printed in its entirety mainly because it shows such a typical profile of why ASA membership is so valuable, Ed.]*

The chapter has been very active as can be seen by the gift to the London Town Gardens [see Azalea Gardens section], the Exceptional Service to the Switers, and publication of a newsletter June 28.

July 9, the chapter held their annual cutting picnic at Wake Robin, the home of Nuran and Joe Miller. Members exchanged evergreen azalea cutting and a potted azalea or companion plant. The chapter elected new officers for the year July 9, 2000 through July 9, 2001. They are: Bob McWhorter, President; Joseph Miller, Vice President; Carol Flowers, Secretary; Dale Flowers, Treasurer. Nuran Miller thanked her chapter friends for the beautiful bouquet of flowers and all the good wishes sent during her recent illness.

New President Bob McWhorter sent in his President's Letter as well as asking for suggestions from the Society on effective membership recruitment activities. Expanding membership is his major goal.

## President's Message

As the new President of the Ben Morrison Chapter, I would like to introduce myself and my wife Rosa. I am a retired Maryland State Police Lieutenant and currently serve as the Commander of the Herman L. Toulson Correctional Boot Camp. I have lived in Anne Arundel County nearly all my life. Rosa was an elementary school teacher and is now a Project Manager for the Office of Naval Intelligence. We have been married 32 years. We have a son and daughter and two grandsons. Throughout our marriage we have shared gardening as a principal hobby.

We share a love of azaleas and rhododendrons.

We have been in our second home for 13 years and, as you might guess, many of our azaleas are as old. Rosa and I joined the ASA in 1997. We discovered the organization through a magazine advertisement or garden catalog. We joined the ASA hoping to learn more about the plants we love and to make friends with others with an interest in an appreciation of azaleas. We expected to meet "experts" in the techniques of hybridization, propagation, and culture of azaleas. In fact, we felt a little intimidated as we headed off to our first meeting with the Ben Morrison Chapter. We felt this way because we are not very knowledgeable about these things and did not know how we would be received.

Chapter members warmly received us and the process of making lasting friends began immediately. Since that time we have found that the ASA and our Ben Morrison Chapter really do educate the novice and inexperienced gardener. Information is freely exchanged and guest speakers have added greatly to our knowledge and enjoyment of meetings.

All this has led me to regard the ASA, and the Ben Morrison Chapter, as among the community's best-kept secrets! I find myself asking why doesn't more of our membership attend chapter meetings? Azaleas sell themselves. Membership in our society is rewarding for all azalea lovers regardless of "expertise." I also ask why isn't membership growing? Rosa and I joined the society to have fun and to make friends. To see other gardens and to appreciate the work that went into creating them. To steal a few ideas that might make our gardens more enjoyable. As president of the chapter I will promote these and all of the aims of the ASA and Ben Morrison Chapter.

I will soon contact each member asking for suggestions, ideas, and perhaps their help. I am enthusiastic about my new role and am optimistic about the expansion of the chapter and the fun we will have along the way.

On behalf of the membership of the Ben Morrison Chapter, I want to thank Joe Miller, now Vice-President and wife Nuran; Dale and Carol Flowers who serve as Secretary and treasurer; and Joan Sweeney who is the Editor of our newsletter. The BM Chapter is the result of their contribution of time, talent and effort, and that of all past chapter officers. I thank Bob and Bee Hobbs for nominating me for the position. I thank my wife Rosa for her daily support and encouragement. I give all of you my commitment to do my very best.

Sincerely,

Bob McWhorter —  
Gambrills, Maryland  
mcwho@erols.com  
410-987-3348

Brookside Gardens Chapter  
Dianne Gregg — Potomac, Maryland  
glassnob@aol.com  
301-299-6456

Here is the Spring 2000 news: The chapter had three azalea sales this spring; one at the US National Arboretum in early April, one at a local school the second weekend in May, and one at Brookside Gardens at the end of May. These sales were able to cover the early-, medium-, and late-bloomers.

Our annual Azalea Show at the Landon Azalea Garden Festival was the first weekend in May. Bill Miller cornered the big awards this year. He won the Sweepstakes for the most blue ribbons and won the Best in Show with *R. 'Cattleya'*, a Kurume introduced in the US in 1917 by the Domoto Brothers Nursery in California.

Our whole chapter gets involved with the Azalea Show. Margaret Vogel was our able Chairman. Janet and Bill Miller, Mary Rutley, Debbie White, Judy Stembel, Bobbie McCeney, Charlie Evans, and Dianne Gregg were all committee chairpersons. Mike White donated the azaleas for the judges' gifts. Gwen Johnson, Senora Simpson, Frank Sharpnack and Ruby Wingate created invitational arrangements.

We had two outstanding speakers this spring at our chapter meetings. One was chapter member Bill Johnson, who spoke on the history and major renovation of the gardens at Hillwood, the estate of the late Marjorie Merriweather Post. Our June speaker was Joel Lerner, who spoke on the "Basic Principals of Landscape Design with Applications for Shade Gardens."

Our annual Plant Auction will be held at the US National Arboretum on October 14. Bill Johnson is the Chairman and Bill Miller will be the auctioneer. If anyone in the Washington, DC area would like to donate a plant, contact Dianne Gregg or Bill Miller.

#### Northern Virginia Chapter

Frances Louer — Haymarket, Virginia  
louerp@gte.net  
703-754-2824

News from the July issue of the July 2000 issue of "The Azalea Clipper": The April 9 business meeting covered rolling over the chapter's certificate of deposit, Barry Sperling's plans for the garden tour held May 6, and presentations by Frances Louer, Phil Louer, and Don Hyatt about the Charleston national convention and the garden tours. Then Bob Stewart and Joe Klimawicz showed some of the new azaleas they have developed and are considering for introduction.

The May garden tour was a great success. Ten members visited gardens of Larry Martin, Alice Pearson, Don Voss, Jane Newman, and Carolyn Beck.

The annual cutting exchange was held at the July 16th meeting held at Spring Gardens Parks. The chapter had approved expenditure of up to \$200 to purchase 21 plants from Nuccios for this occasion. All 21 were Nuccio hybrids, of varying and unknown hardiness. Four members — Bruno Kaelin, Joe Klimawicz, Frances Louer, and Dan Krabill — are caring for these plants that came from southern California. In two to three years, once chapter members have all gotten cuttings, the chapter will auction off the stock plants.

The newsletter contained a one-page summary of how to propagate by cuttings. President Dan Krabill asked again for chapter members to list azalea varieties they would like to obtain, since response has been so low. Contact him at 703-534-7441 (or [Dkrabil@securagroup.com](mailto:Dkrabil@securagroup.com)) or write him at 6009 Copley Lane, McLean, VA 22101. He will fill the request from his own yard or from another chapter member's.

#### Oconee Chapter

Frank Bryan — Lithonia, Georgia  
steveriver@aol.com  
770-760-1569

June 17, the chapter held its annual azalea cutting and swap party at the home of Dr. Ben Reid in Stockbridge, Georgia. His extensive collection of 20,000 azaleas, including 300 different Glenn Dale varieties and many Satsuki, provided a wealth of plant material.

August 13, the chapter reviewed the current status of the slide series "Growing Azaleas," which is a revision of a 1981 Cooperative Extension Service (CES) slide set and script. After six previous drafts, a six-page script and 77 slides were ready for chapter review and comment. The selection process was tough; thousands of slides came from the collections of Frank Bryan, Richard Clapp, Allison Fuqua, Jim Thornton, and the CES, with some other specifically pho-

tographed to fill in gaps. Allison Fuqua (the chapter's "Guru" on Azaleas) and Gary Wade of the CES and University of Georgia both reviewed the script.

Topics in the slide program include: temperature zones in Georgia; flower forms, patterns, and characteristics; common varieties, such as Kurume and Southern Indian; examples of other azalea hybrid groups with flowers with unique characteristics, such as Glenn Dale, Back Acres, Robin Hill, Kehr, Pennington, Linwood, Satsuki, Pericat, and Encore; native on the latter category, especially some rather controversial issues relating to fertilizing and planting and to see if chapter members have other slides that need to go into the program.

Plans for the series are to make it available in a variety of formats. It will be produced in standard slide tray format for presentation at garden club meetings and other groups throughout Georgia. He introductory and commentary and word slides will be developed in Power Point computer software with digitized slides so that the program can be presented using LCD format computer projector. Finally, it will be put on the University of Georgia's website.

If you would like to review a copy of the script, contact Frank Bryan, 8322 Pleasant Hill Road, Lithonia, GA 3058 (Phone 770-760-1569; e-mail, [steveriver@aol.com](mailto:steveriver@aol.com)).

#### Tri-State Chapter

Robin Hahn — Evansville, Indiana  
812-985-9388

Mr. Robin Hahn was elected the chapter's new president. He and member John Migas are working to rejuvenate the chapter and its presence in the area. The chapter holds two meetings a year, one in the spring, which included a garden tour this year, and one in the fall planned for mid-November this year.

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## NEW MEMBERS

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### AT-LARGE MEMBERS

Ronald Asbill  
2724 16th ST  
SACRAMENTO, CA 95818-3424  
916-448-7922

Sam Bolick \*  
2215 Trinity Church Road  
Concord, NC 28027  
704-795-3900

### FLOWERWOOD LINERS INC.

Attn: Vaughn Street  
PO BOX 369  
LOXLEY, AL 36551-0369  
800-858-3521

Gordon Lucas \*  
3712 CREEK BEND DR  
WAKE FOREST, NC 27587  
919-562-1413

John F Smith  
640 MASSEY RD  
STUART, VA 24171-2670  
540-694-2664

### BROOKSIDE GARDENS CHAPTER

Linda Brown \*  
10705 DRUMM AVE  
KENSINGTON, MD 20895  
301-949-6302

Joel M Lerner \*  
PO BOX 15121  
CHEVY CHASE, MD 20825  
301-495-4747

Harold Smetana \*  
18804 STONEYHURST ST  
OLNEY, MD 20832  
301-774-2771

### DALLAS CHAPTER

Rachel Reed  
15703 RILL LN  
HOUSTON, TX 77062-4227  
281-486-7004

### NORTHERN VIRGINIA CHAPTER

Nancy Arrington  
8388 BRIARMONT LN  
MANASSAS, VA 20112-2755  
703-368-8431

Rose Ann Gismondi  
4057 GOLDMINE RD  
GOLDVEIN, VA 22720-2107  
540-439-0432

Bill Stepka  
715 GLENDALE DR  
RICHMOND, VA 23229-6409  
804-740-7832

### OCONEE CHAPTER

Carol Robacker \*  
807 ANDREAN WAY  
PEACHTREE CITY, GA 30269

Rockdale House for Men  
Attn: John Edwards  
1060 Scott Street  
Conyers, GA 30012-4560

\* Indicates new members who have e-mail addresses.

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## *In Memory*

### **Marjorie Taylor**

**Marjorie Taylor**, wife of the late Glenn Taylor, died on August 9, 2000. She and Glenn were both charter members of the Northern Virginia Chapter of ASA.

In 1996, Marjorie and Glenn Taylor were each recognized with certificates of distinguished service by the ASA for seven years' dedicated service as the Society's membership chairman and treasurer, respectively.

As chapter membership chairman, Marj worked diligently for seven years to help the Northern Virginia chapter grow. Her enthusiasm in the development of the chapter was fundamental to its growth. Her

love for azaleas was very evident both in her conversations with other members and in her interest in the different varieties that were being hybridized. She kept thorough records of their many azaleas. Glenn Taylor developed a hybrid azalea in honor of his wife, by crossing R. 'Coral Bells' and R. 'Hinodegiri' and registered it as the cultivar R. 'Marj T'. The azalea is hardy in Zone 6b, with a deep pink, slightly tubular bloom on a compact plant. The ASA board is trying to find a specimen to donate to the George Harding Garden at River Farm, in Virginia, as a memorial to Marj.

Another of her passions was all types of needlework. Marj was the

last of eleven children in her family. The funeral service for Marj was held on August 14, 2000, which would have been her 90th birthday. Burial was in Quantico National Cemetery.

According to Marj's wishes, memorial contributions can be made to the Northern Virginia Chapter of ASA. Mail to Leslie Nanney, Treasurer, 8646 Tuttle Road, Springfield, VA 22152.

### **Joe Blackwell**

Ben Morrison Chapter member **Joe Blackwell** died December 1, 1999, at the age of 90. He is survived by his wife, Phila Belle.