

# Chapter News

## Ben Morrison Chapter

*Joan Sweeney, Newsletter Editor  
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The chapter's Christmas meeting was held December 10, 2000, at Bob and Rosa McWhorter's home in Gambrills, Maryland. Don Hyatt, the featured speaker, showed slides and described his summer 1999 trip to the gardens of England, Ireland, and Scotland. Don is and ASA board member and President of the Potomac Valley Chapter of the ARS. At the short business meeting, the chapter unanimously approved the proposal to host the 2004 ASA convention to be held in Annapolis, Maryland. Carol Segree will serve as the Planning Committee Chair, with Bob McWhorter as Co-Chair. They will use a convention checklist provided by Denise Stelloh.

The chapter's executive committee met November 5 to discuss the meeting schedule for 2001, plans for a plant sale as a fund-raiser, a spring membership drive, and a proposal to host the ASA convention in 2004. Members of the executive planning committee are: Charles and Wanda Hanners, Carol Segree, Bob and Bee Hobbs, and others as they volunteer. A point under consideration is increased collaboration with London Town Gardens and use of their facilities, which should increase media interest in the ASA.

Some very clever membership drive activities are in the works, as targeted efforts in the north, central, and southern sections of the chapter's region in April or May. Both people and promotional communications are involved: Teams of chapter members will visit major azalea nurseries during the height of azalea sales season to show pictures of members' gardens in bloom supported by flyers and information on joining the ASA, while helping with selection and purchase of azaleas. Promotional materials

would include the ASA membership brochure as well as plant tags that promote ASA membership and the chapter plant show/sale. The tags would read: "Learn how to take good care of me. Join the Azalea Society of America's local chapter in Anne Arundel, Calvert, Charles, and St. Mary's counties, Maryland. Call: 410-923-6408 or 301-855-5269. Thanks, I feel better now!" They are exploring whether it will be advisable to have the host nursery's name on the back of the tag as an inducement to authorize the membership activities.

Newsletter editor Joan Sweeney asked members in the January 2001 edition of *The Azalea Alert* about reducing production costs by sending the newsletter out by e-mail to those members who have it. Currently the newsletter is sent out to 55 members

The February 4, 2001, meeting was held at the US National Arboretum in Washington, DC. Barbara Bullock, Curator of Azaleas and Rhododendrons at the National Arboretum, gave a slide presentation and discuss azalea propagation. Then she led a tour of the National Arboretum's azalea propagation area, including some cuttings that were blooming. She also provided a list of older azaleas in the collection and discussed how chapter members might get cuttings. Ben Morrison chapter invited members of Brookside Gardens and Northern Virginia chapters to attend.

The March 4 meeting at London Town Gardens featured Bill Johnson's presentation "Till the Gardens Open Again," which discusses the Merriweather Post Garden azaleas, companion plants, and older azalea varieties.

## Northern Virginia Chapter

*David Nanney, Chapter President  
nanney@erols.com*

Bob Hobbs, of the Ben Morrison Chapter, is one of the Society's members who has been studying the many hybrid azalea groups and how to present this information to other enthusiasts. February 25, 2001, he gave a presentation to the Northern Virginia Chapter entitled "Help! I'm Trying to Understand Hybrid Groups" at the George Mason Branch of the Fairfax County Libraries. He covered about 13 different groups. It is hoped that this material will become an article for publication in **THE AZALEAN** soon. A special bonus was the talk on planting azalea seeds given by Don Hyatt in the same session.

## Brookside Gardens Chapter

*Dianne Gregg—President  
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At the December meeting, the chapter awarded the Frederic P. Lee commendation to William F. Steele, Jr., owner of Steele's Nursery in West Chester, Pennsylvania. Bill Steele has been a member of the Brookside Gardens Chapter for many years. He has been introducing new varieties of azaleas from Brookside Gardens Chapter member hybridizers and others. A very significant feature of his plants is that his identification tags are all complete and correct.

Don Voss was the featured speaker at the meeting, presenting a slide version of his presentation, "How Azaleas Came to our Gardens," given to the 2000 ASA Convention. Since many members missed that convention, it was real treat. [See also article with same title published in **THE AZALEAN**, Fall 2000, 22 (3): 56-62.] It helped members understand the history and geographical origins of azaleas in American gardens.

Note that Brookside and McCrillis Gardens are now featured on the Brookside Gardens homepage—[www.mc-mncppc.org/parks/brookside/](http://www.mc-mncppc.org/parks/brookside/). The site includes: a garden overview, a "planning a visit" section with graphics and a map, a current calendar of events and conservatory shows, basics on library service, and the Friends of Brookside Gardens group, an illustrated "What's in Bloom," where to go for more information on programs for adults and children, as well as how to schedule a wedding or other special event at the gardens.

### New Chapters Forming?

The Society appears to be attracting new centers of interest in the Hendersonville, North Carolina, and in the Norfolk and Portsmouth, Virginia, areas. We hope these groups of interested people will organize in time to be approved by the ASA Board of Directors at the 2001 Convention in Asheville. In the meantime, if you would like to offer support, or get in touch with these groups, here are contacts:

For the Hendersonville, North Carolina, area contact:

Ed Collins  
136 Finley Cove Road  
Hendersonville NC 28739-7937  
828-697-9228  
[azaleaed@brinet.com](mailto:azaleaed@brinet.com)

For the Norfolk, Virginia, area if you have e-mail, contact:

Mike Andruczyk  
6700 Azalea Garden Road  
Norfolk VA 23518-5337  
757-441-5831  
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For those without e-mail, contact:

William T. Lloyd  
4020 Timberland Drive  
Portsmouth VA 23703  
757-484-1816



Mary Rutley, Brookside Gardens Chapter Vice-President, presents the 2000 Frederic P. Lee Commendation to Bill Steele of West Chester, Pennsylvania, at the chapter's annual meeting.



Here, the individual flower of *R. vaseyi* shows the brilliance of its coloration in a close-up taken at milepost 419.2 on the Blue Ridge Parkway. This native is the namesake for a new ASA Chapter forming in the Hendersonville, North Carolina, area. The formative meeting was set for March 25th. The Vaseyi Chapter will be applying for its charter at the 2001 convention in Asheville, North Carolina. [Photo by Ed Collins.]