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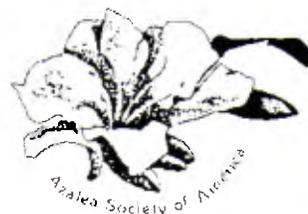


**“A Family Reunion” –
Joint ARS/ASA 2002 Convention Preview**

The Coleman and Sommerville Gardens

Designing with Native Azaleas

**Ben Morrison Chapter Helps Conserve
Old Azalea Varieties**



Post Office Box 34536
West Bethesda, Maryland
20827-0536

President's Letter

Joseph E. Schild, Jr. — Hixson, Tennessee

Friends,

With the memory of holidays behind us, but still warm in our hearts and minds, we look to the New Year for a new future without the company of numerous friends and fellow gardeners. Not only because of the events of September, but in spite of those sad and traumatic losses, we honor our friendships by keeping on, keeping on.

What better way to remember those passed than by holding dear those interpersonal relationships between family members, close friends, and soon-to-be new friends. What I found through all of the debris of recent loss was my family growing closer and determined to take each day as a blessing, a gift from the Creator.

With the above said from the heart, I view things quite differently in today's world. Not even the late, out-of-season blooming of an azalea or rhododendron perturbed me as it once did. I found laughter as I was fussed at by a pair of wrens for chasing them from my potting building before I closed the door for the evening. A gaudy red cardinal's ratcheting over me pruning a Burford holly, his winter hide-away, seemed in full context and somehow sweet to the ear.

In mid-October, as a newly found azalea friend and I strolled the paths of lofty Wayah Bald, N.C., the very air seemed sweeter and yet, not quite.

"What is that odor?" he asked, and I had to chuckle as I recalled the same aroma from years ago.

"Wet hound dog," I replied, and then saw the look of recognition in his eyes. "It's the acid in the decomposing leaves

making humus," I added. I took a small branch from a yellow birch, and skinned the thin, tender bark back, and held it out for him to smell.

Later, a huge smile washed across his face as he recognized the sweet fragrance of wintergreen. These were just a few moments in a delightful day of exploring the wonders of Nature and collecting a few seed pods from the azaleas that had been on fire with bright blooms back in June.

Just 15 minutes before, as we stood looking out over the valley far blow us from the picnic area, two B-1 bombers flew over us so close I felt the urge to duck. They were transitioning from straight to swept wing configuration, and the awesome sight almost, almost, put a wet blanket on my day.

The point I make is simple. We chose to enjoy the day in friendship and adventure, taking the gifts from nature carefully and with a certain reverence. I honored the friends lost by making a new one.

Through the book loan from my new friend, I just read the first four chapters from Michael Frome's book, *Strangers in High Places, The Story of the Great Smoky Mountains*, and on page 23, a quote trapped me. From an inscription, placed on the stone above the seed house of John Bartram in Schuylkill, Pennsylvania, taken from the lines of Alexander Pope:

Slave to no sect, who takes no private road,
But looks through Nature up to Nature's God.

Thank you, Fuzzy Perritt, and thank you all for making this Society a bright spot in what might have been a very dim world.

ous support of the Azalea Society of America.

Also, last issue (Fall 2001, 23 (3) 62-63), the name of Buddy Lee's Encore azalea *Rhododendron* 'August Through Frost' should have read *R. 'August To Frost'*.

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, 1000 Moody Bridge Road, Cleveland, SC 29635.

Corrections

The list of Endowment Members was incomplete in the 2001 ASA Roster and should have shown L. Malcolm Clark, Harold M. Dodd, and Donald H. Voss in 2001. We appreciate their continued and very gener-

Editor
Barbara Stump

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On the Cover:

This image from the garden of Joe and Donna Coleman is an example of the abundant color and choice plantings that await you on the tours during the ARS/ASA 2002 Convention in Atlanta. Front and center is a perennial Society favorite, *Rhododendron* 'Millie Mac' showing its austrinum heritage in the orange-red buds. In the background is a vibrant purple, the result of a cross between ever-green purples, *R.* 'Sherwoodii' x 'Purple Splendor'. (Image by Joe Coleman.)

Convention Volunteers Needed April 16-22, 2002 in Atlanta!

Please contact Ruth or Frank Bryan, 770-760-1569 (rudie2rudie@aol.com) to volunteer your time to help with registration, logistics, and especially for plant sales, set-up the day before, and take-down the day after. You'll be glad you did, and you'll meet wonderful people!



A Family Reunion — Joint ARS / ASA 2002 Convention Preview

Roger Duvall — Atlanta, Georgia

Broadleaf evergreens have long been among the most popular plants in southern gardens. Magnolia, camellia, gardenia, and azalea all conjure up romantic images of the landscape and history of the South; rhododendron and mountain laurel are the best-loved native plants of the southern Appalachian Mountains. All can be grown in and around Atlanta. South Georgia summers are too warm for broadleaf hybrid rhododendrons; winters north of Atlanta are too cold for many hybrid azaleas, but Atlanta is happily located where gardeners can and do grow all of the broadleaf evergreens.

According to an aphorism making its way around gardening circles, "If you want your garden to *look* Southern, plant evergreen azaleas, but if you want it to *be* Southern, plant native azaleas." The 2002 convention will focus special attention on the 13 species of deciduous azaleas native to Georgia. Though they have not yet become as popular as the broadleaf evergreens in our gardens, they are not the rarity that they once were. In many of the gardens on our tours, they are, in fact, the featured plant.

The headquarters of the Convention is the Atlanta Marriott, Century Center. The Marriott is a full-service hotel with an outdoor swimming pool, health club, coffee shop, and restaurant serving breakfast, lunch, and dinner. A shuttle from the Atlanta airport is available. From the Marriott, it is seven miles to the Atlanta Botanical Gardens, six miles to the Atlanta History Museum (where the Azalea Chapter, ARS, maintains a chapter garden), and three miles to Lenox Mall, recently voted Atlanta's "Best Mall," and Phipps Plaza.

The convention is sponsored jointly by the Azalea Chapter of the American Rhododendron Society and the Oconee Chapter of the Azalea Society

of America. Many gardeners are members of both organizations. The Azalea Chapter was chartered in 1968, under the guidance of Ralph Pennington, a local hybridizer and nurseryman. The Oconee Chapter of the ASA received its charter in 1991. Jim Thornton, past president of the ASA, was also the first president of the Oconee Chapter.

Speakers—The speakers lined up for the convention represent a wealth of knowledge and talent. Convention goers can become native azalea experts if they choose to attend all the lectures concerning the natives, but the convention schedule offers a variety of expertise and subjects for those with a broader scope. Selecting from lectures on hybrid rhododendrons, evergreen azaleas, kalmia, and companion plants will make for some difficult decisions. There will also be practical advice on landscape design, pest control, and how computers can help us in the garden. Our speakers are academics, landscape designers, authors, nursery managers, hybridizers, and amateur horticulturists. Many of them are also the people who keep our gardening societies going. All of them are practical gardeners just like the rest of us. We feel certain that attendees will go away loaded with new ideas and eager to apply them in their own gardens.

Tours—The joint ARS/ASA convention in 2002 offers everyone the opportunity to visit a wealth of Georgia's private and public gardens in and around Metro Atlanta, Athens, Callaway Gardens in Pine Mountain, and in Auburn, Alabama. Each garden has its own unique story behind its conception and development. Over 21 gardens are featured in six different tour packages, spread over four days:

Tour A: Thursday, April 18, 2002: Athens Tour—Picadilly Farm, a

wholesale nursery, and the Giberson, Lambert, Yeatts, and Dooley gardens.

Tour B: Thursday, April 18, 2002: N. Atlanta Private Garden Tour—Sommerville, Ligon, Caras, Jones, and Gilbert gardens.

Tour C: Friday, April 19, 2002: Hiawasse/Helen Tour—Scenic tour of the North Georgia Mountains, a shopping tour of antiques and craft shops in the Alpine/Bavarian village of Helen, and the Hamilton garden.

Tour D: Saturday, April 20, 2002: Opelika/Auburn Tour—Very special private collections of wildflowers, evergreen rhododendrons, deciduous azaleas, and camellias at the Dean, Speake, Greenleaf, Corley, and Robinson gardens.

Tour E: Saturday, April 20, 2002: S. Atlanta Tour—Three large gardens with numerous mature specimens of rhododendrons and azaleas at the Coleman, Sams, and Reid gardens.

Tour F: Sunday, April 21, 2002: Callaway Gardens—Your chance to have a private tour of the primarily hybrid azaleas in the new 40-acre Brothers Azalea Bowl and the Mirror Pond garden that Fred Galle planted during the development of the gardens.

To whet your appetite, the wonders of both the Coleman and Sommerville gardens are described in pages 80 and 82 in this issue.

Special Convention Events

Plant Sale—Around 5,000 plants will be offered at the plant sale, which promises to be one of the highlights of the convention. All of the Georgia native azaleas should be available, including seedlings from locations famous for their hybrid swarms. Named hybrids will also be for sale, including

a good selection of those developed by Dr. Aromi. A large group of outstanding evergreen azaleas will be included, and for those who are interested in evergreen rhododendron species, the sale will include *Rhododendron maximum* 'Red Max,' standard *R. chapmanii*, Gene Cline's dwarf *R. chapmanii*, and a ball-truss form of *R. minus*. Many of the plants will be in three- to four-inch pots for easy transport and so that conventioners can assemble a good collection. Payment must be by check or cash; unfortunately, we cannot accept credit cards.

Mini Trade Fair—Nurserymen, landscapers, and others who would like to advertise their goods and services at the convention are being invited to participate in a mini trade fair. We will supply tables and chairs; participants can bring catalogues, brochures, etc. to promote their business. There is no fee, but participants must be registered for the convention. We believe that this will be an excellent way for horticultural businessmen, particularly those who do business by catalogue or the Internet, to make contact with their customers.

Flower show—The flower show will be a judged competition with categories for all varieties of rhododendron and azaleas, both evergreen and deciduous. We believe that guests from

other parts of the country will be surprised at the variety that can be successfully grown here.

Plant auction—The auction, to be conducted by Maarten van der Giessen, should be a lively affair. The plants will include many prize one-of-a-kind deciduous azaleas.

Bonsai demonstration—The president of the Azalea Chapter ARS, Hubert Jones, is also a devotee of the art of bonsai. Hubert's is one of two outstanding bonsai collections included in the North Georgia tour. To see how it is done, plan to attend his demonstration.

Photography show—A judged photography show is currently in the planning stages.

Hybridizers' roundtable—Anyone who is especially interested in or curious about producing worthwhile hybrids should plan to attend the hybridizers' roundtable, which will be moderated by Fred Minch. The Atlanta roundtable should be an especially good one for new ideas, since we are sure to get cross-fertilization from the two national organizations.

Propagation roundtable—The propagation roundtable promotes the best practices and encourages innovation. Anyone who has too many single-

ton plants should attend and get inspired to propagate. This year's moderator will be Ed Collins.

Want to Know More?

More information about our speakers and a great many additional garden illustrations can be found in the convention website at arsazalea.tripod.com. We believe that you will leave Atlanta envious of our spectacular spring display and we will do our best to live up to our reputation for hospitality.

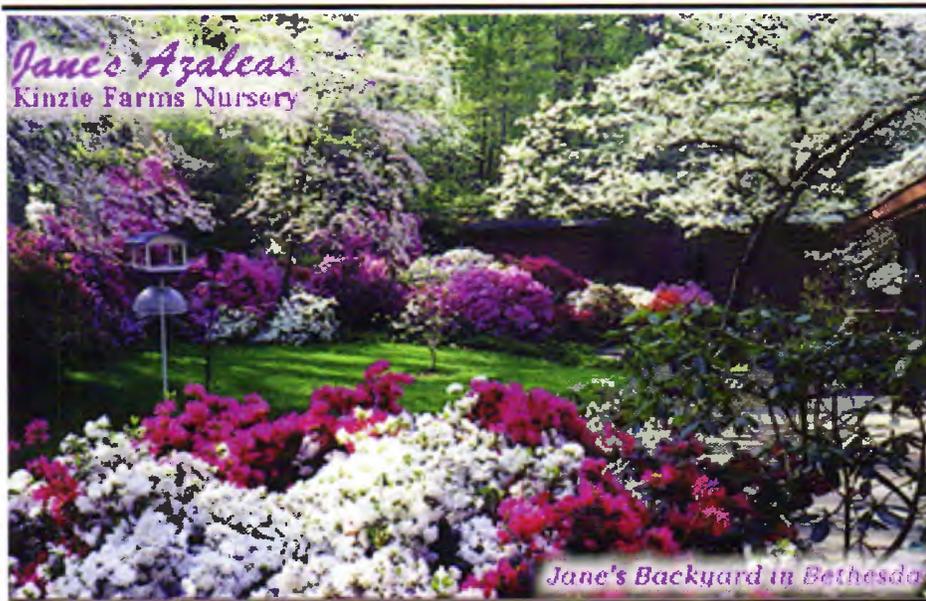
Register Now

Make your plans to attend this joint convention today. Study the enclosed insert and decide which tours you want to attend. Then, fill out the registration form included as an insert in this issue. Make your registration fee check payable to "Azalea Chapter Convention Account" and mail both the check and the registration form to:

Edith Davis
132 Garden Lane
Decatur, GA 30030

See you in Atlanta!

Roger Duvall has been a member of the Azalea Chapter of the ARS since 1988. He is webmaster for the Azalea Chapter home page on the Internet and maintains the Convention web page, as well.



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Come to Atlanta April 17-

The joint ARS/ASA Convention offers truly rare and wonderful opportunities to see private gardens and a very special tour of one of America's most famous public azalea gardens. Each garden has its own unique story behind its conception and development. Here are just a few of the thousands of 'picture-perfect' sights awaiting you. Register to join us on tour in Atlanta.

Tour A: April 18, 2002 — Athens, Georgia, area tour

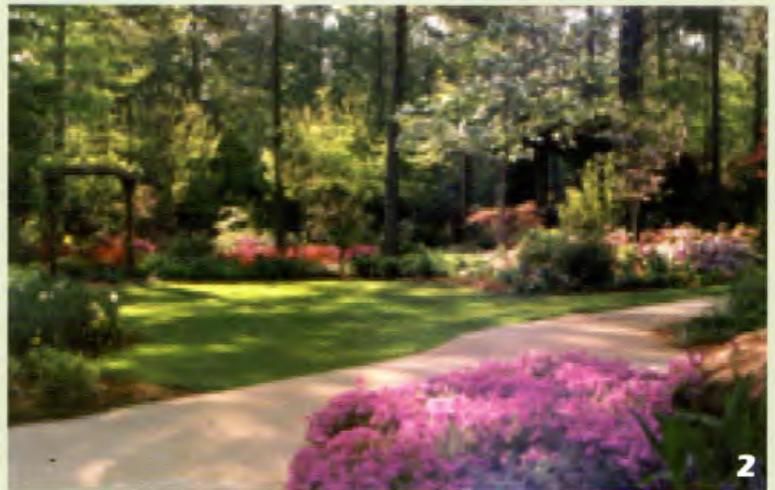


1. Seen blooming at Picadilly Farm. Since 1981, Carleen and Sam Jones have been developing gardens and a retail/wholesale nursery on a twenty-acre site with wooded hillsides and gently rolling open areas. Picadilly Farm has been the largest producer of Lenten Roses (*Helleborus x hybridus*) in the US.

Carleen is in charge of the display gardens, which include: an informal southern shade garden featuring hostas and companion plants; a winter garden with camelias, hellebores, and

other favorites; a conifer garden with over 300 species and cultivars; a sunny perennial border; and Sam's working landscape, a vegetable garden. A stroll through the well-marked paths throughout the property will reveal hundreds of unusual plants tucked in here and there. Shown here is a close-up of a deep purple hellebore, a plant for the discriminating eye.

2. Tom Giberson's Garden is well-planned and well-executed. Begun in 1990 as three woodland gardens and a central water feature, the garden is now well defined by 100 tons of stackstone walls and choice ornamental trees such as filigree and coral-bark Japanese maples and corkscrew willow.



Tour B: April 18, 2002 — North Atlanta Private Garden Tour



3. Bob Gilbert's Garden, a 13-acre estate near the base of Kennesaw Mountain, is a virtual arboretum of over 2,500 taxa surrounding an 1860s farmhouse. Complementing this connoisseur's garden are sculptures in metal, stone, and wood placed throughout the garden and, shown here, in one of the ponds with a 20-foot waterfall.

4. Earl Sommerville's Garden is a feast for students of the native deciduous azalea. Shown here is an open-pollinated seedling, one of hundreds that thrive in his rich beds. Earl Sommerville's collection of more than 3,000 azaleas and rhododendrons looks like it grew naturally on his forest-like lot. Of all the plants in his collection, only a handful has come



from nurseries. Many he has transplanted from the woods; others he has grown from seed; still others he has grown from rooted cuttings. He also gets great pleasure and spectacular results from cross-pollinating plants. He does most of this work in a state-of-the-art greenhouse he designed and built. For more information and pictures of this garden, visit Earl's website (www.mindspring.com/~earlsommerville).

21, 2002 to See the Sights!

Tour D: April 20, 2002 — Opelika / Auburn Tour

5. Dogwoods, azaleas, and pine trees make Tom Corley's garden look like an impressionist painting. The garden of Tom and Mary Corley is located five miles west of Auburn, Alabama, on the edge of the quaint village of Lochapoka, Alabama. The 18-acre garden is entered by a single lane country road bordered by 1,000 camellias, 475 rhododendrons, and over 1,500 native azaleas. At the end of the road is a 160-year-old, beautifully restored log home. Standing on the back deck of the cabin, one can look down into an ancient *R. canescens* over 20 feet tall and look out over a creek-fed pond that is bordered with azaleas reflected in the water. The stunning collection of seedling azaleas includes an amazing example of a deep red huge-flowered *R. calendulaceum*. The garden also is home to 10 rare dogwood varieties.

6. The Greenleaf Garden is about as complete a collection of species native to the eastern United State as you can find. This intimate one-acre garden is designed in rooms, with trees such as dogwood, Carolina silverbell, *Magnolia macrophylla* and *Styrax americana* along with 100 varieties of evergreen rhododendron and rare selections of *Kalmia latifolia* providing the backdrop for some 300 deciduous azaleas and numerous herbaceous perennials, including over 20 species of trillium. With the exception of *R. rhodora*, all species native to the eastern United States are represented, and even *R. occidentale* is represented in hybrid form. The deciduous azaleas have been carefully selected for flower form, color, plant shape, and bloom time from thousands of plants grown from seed by Greenleaf. Many of these came from crosses made by Greenleaf and R.O. Smitherman.



Tour E: April 20, 2002 — Atlanta Tour

7. A tremendous variety of azaleas and rhododendrons thrive in the Atlanta garden of Joe and Donna Coleman. Turn to page 80 in this issue to read more about the wealth of their collection and how they created it.

8. The Southern Indicas are justly famed for the scale and exuberance of their bloom. Seen here along a path, the Pericat hybrids look to equal the Southern Indicas in size and splendor.

Tour F: April 21, 2002 — Callaway Gardens Tour

9. The Callaway Brothers Azalea Bowl, completed in 1999, is the latest addition to 50 years of azalea horticulture at Callaway Gardens. Visitors stroll through 5,000 azaleas of 100 evergreen varieties and a dozen native species. The woodland hillside between the Memorial Chapel and the Sibley Horticultural Center lights up in spring with colors reflected on the placid waters of Lower Falls Creek Lake. While on tour we will also visit the Overlook Garden, home to much of the collection of deciduous and evergreen azaleas Fred Galle planted during his 30 years at Callaway Gardens. Society member Hank Bruno, Trails Manager, will treat us to insights on the history, current efforts and future goals of perhaps the most extensive azalea garden developed in 20th century America.



Azalea Gardens

[Both the Coleman and Sommerville gardens will be on tour during the Atlanta convention in 2002, jointly sponsored by the Azalea Society of America and the American Rhododendron Society. Visit the website dedicated to the 2002 convention at www.arsazalea.tripod.com.]

The Coleman Garden

Joe and Donna Coleman — Lithonia, Georgia

On the east side of Atlanta, by the Yellow River, our garden continues to grow and evolve, reflecting the changing paradigm of the modern landscape. Most of us buy a house, then at some point get around to thinking about a garden. But in 1980, when we bought our wooded ten-acre parcel near Lithonia, Georgia, the landscape was the number one priority. After several years, our ordinary suburban

friends, new sources for evergreen azaleas were found at Covington Nursery, just at the time Ralph Pennington was selling his nursery, and so many plants were being dispersed. It was a mind-expanding experience to find a source for hundreds of Glenn Dale, Gable, Kurume, Back Acres, and other azaleas. It was wonderful! More azaleas equaled less lawn. Unfortunately, there are limits

population. One enterprising real estate agent even pointed out the empty holes at the entrance to a gated community where plants had been liberated! So much for part time gardening in the mountains!

A search closer to home resulted in the purchase of 10 wooded acres along the Yellow River in eastern DeKalb County. At one time the property had



The garden of Joe and Donna Coleman is a wonderland of color in the spring, as shown here by their collection of Kurume azaleas. (Image by Joe Coleman.)



As they mature over the years, the azaleas have developed seedling crosses naturally. This row shows the variation that occurred when R. 'Mildred' crossed with R. 'Dainty'. (Image by Joe Coleman.)

home in Stone Mountain with its usual foundation plantings and lawn had gradually been filled up. The problem was I hated to mow grass. In an effort to cut down on this tedious chore, I began expanding pine islands and filling in these shady areas with evergreen azaleas. No one said they would be addictive, though!

Having acquired all the normal evergreen azalea varieties from local nurseries, we joined the ARS in 1976 at the time the Azalea Chapter was being revitalized. In meeting new

even to a neighborhood lot.

For several years in the late 1970s, a cabin in the north Georgia mountains seemed the perfect answer. A weekend retreat with no telephone, no red clay, no grass, and the bonus of fragrant native azaleas was a "no brainer." That is, until we realized that weekend retreats meant being stuck in traffic every Sunday evening with all the holiday lake inhabitants, having an empty, unguarded residence five days a week, and providing free meals for the north Georgia deer

been farmed. In fact, the entire surrounding area was filled with a number of small farms, which over the years had been abandoned due to poor or exhausted soil. Due to extensive granite outcroppings, the suburban invasion was delayed in this area. New subdivisions have only recently been built.

Although the land had been terraced for farming, over the years it had been allowed to return to a natural state with a full canopy, primarily of pines and water oaks, interspersed

with white oaks, southern red oaks, sassafras, dogwoods, elms, and hickories. Soil testing revealed that due to the porous nature of the soil, it was deficient in every nutrient—you could fertilize to your heart's content. Unfortunately, there were no native azaleas or desirable native wildflowers. We did have superior forms of poison ivy, Virginia creeper, honeysuckle, wild grape vines, smilax, cut thorns, blackberry brambles, and other undesirables. The only undesirable plant we didn't have was kudzu, and it was up the hill heading our way.

Because we found enough land, high shade, and at that time, water, the property was purchased and the house completed in July 1980, just in time for the heat wave of the century. Having propagated azaleas for the move, we had to wait until late October for the first plants to hit the soil. But as time revealed, a bobcat does a lousy job of digging smilax bulbs, and wild grape vines in trees took time to clear. Persistent spraying was found to kill poison ivy, but only with constant vigilance. Twenty years after the fact, weeding is still a constant battle, even in mature beds.

Over the years, the original garden has grown as the watering system has expanded in all directions. It now encompasses some five acres of mature plantings of more than 4,000 evergreen and deciduous azaleas, 2,000 rhododendrons and over 100 varieties of Japanese maples. By the time you sprinkle in viburnums, camellias, laurels, hostas, perennials, and wildflowers, you have the makings of a woodland garden made for wandering. This is what the Coleman garden is all about—take any path and go discover!

The curse of being a plant collector is that you want all of them and you'll never be able to find a source for them all. A landscaper's nightmare is a collection of plants, one of every variety that he must blend into a perfect schematic design. Having accepted that impossibility a long time ago, we placed loose groups of hybrids

throughout the garden. While the main plantings of Dexter rhododendron and Robin Hill azaleas are at the front of the house, don't be surprised to find favorites throughout the garden. Some plants were grouped by colors, others by hybridizer; still others were placed because they were perfect for a particular hole.

National conventions can also complicate life unduly. Attending the 1979 convention in Vancouver I fell in love with yaks (*Rhododendron yakushimanum*). No one said you had to wait five years for the plants to adapt to our native conditions in order to bloom. Even then, they were not equal to the plants in the Northwest. In 1980, Cape Cod revealed the Dexter rhododendrons and the next search was on. Conventions can always surprise: attending the 1998 Azalea Society of America Convention in northern Virginia, I discovered Pete Vines' group of evergreen azalea hybrids, the Holly Springs, which were totally new to me. Another new search began. I also rediscovered the breadth of the original Glenn Dale collection. Long after I thought I had the best that Ben Morrison produced, I found I was wrong. The search for a few elusive Glenn Dales will go on for quite some time.

No garden is a static place, particularly with the vicissitudes of nature. Windstorms, blizzards, and pine bark beetles continually thin the forest canopy. Although it seemed disastrous at the time, this does allow for better flower bud production. The reduced rainfall, particularly these last 10 years is another matter entirely. With the first county water restrictions, a pump was put in the Yellow River and the irrigation lines were changed from county water to river water. The river has only once dropped too low to irrigate—but those six weeks without water in August and September did considerable damage to new plantings and established rhododendrons. Continued drought restrictions have made it tough to introduce new rhododendrons to the garden. Grouping pots

together to keep them watered may be a necessity, but I would prefer to have the plants in the ground. The established native deciduous azaleas have gone through the drought without a hint of disturbance. Even in the wild they have bloomed well and continue to grow when other plant material has struggled or faded completely.

Often underneath the shrubs can be found the jewels of the garden: native wildflowers. Pink lady slippers planted in one section have naturalized in several areas showing a distinct preference for pine straw pathways. Trilliums can now be encountered on every level; beds of *Iris cristata*, *Chrysogonum* 'Eco Lacquer Spider', and *Sarcococca* mat out in all directions. Christmas rose (hellebore) drifts towards some paths as jack-in-the-pulpits take over others. Pockets of bloodroot and oriental bloodroot have taken over banks. Epimediums at least stay in their places. Selaginella (rainbow or peacock moss) thrives in shade covering the mulch layer of a granite outcropping. Heucheras and tiarellas border numerous paths. Bleeding heart has bled all over the front yard.

Japanese maples are a favorite accent plant in the garden. In spring and fall, their leaf color highlights the seasonal changes. A multitude of dwarf and dissectum forms line the paths, while larger palmatums are scattered on every level. We have to pull numerous small seedlings out of beds and paths around the more established plants, just to keep from being inundated with maples. Their bright colors in spring accentuate the colors of azalea and rhododendron flowers, but the fall coloring is a priceless bonus. Special favorites include: the old standards *Acer palmatum* 'Crimson Queen' and *A. p.* 'Viridis', dwarfs like *A. p.* 'Kiyohime' and *A. p.* 'Koshime', and *A. p.* 'Octopus' and *A. p.* 'Waterfall'.

Seedlings have not been neglected either. Several beds of rhododendron, evergreen azalea, and deciduous azalea seedlings are located above the

driveway. *Rhododendron* 'The Hon. Jean Marie de Montague' x 'Etta Burrows' has yielded a series of good reds and a series of cream to yellow rhododendron from the cross *R.* 'Dumpers Yellow' x *R.* 'Phipps 32' is being evaluated. This far south, any growable yellow rhododendron should be named "in your dreams." *R.* 'Marchioness of Lansdowne' x *R.* 'Ruby Bowman' has produced some interesting lavenders. *R.* 'Red Slippers' x *R.* 'Mother's Day' did not render a single scarlet, but did produce a beautiful rose, a circular orange/red blotch, even a bicolor. *R.* 'Mildred' x *R.* 'Dainty' produced a wide range of colors including a translucent white called *R.* 'Whiteout', and *R.* 'Glacier' x *R.* 'Red Slippers' produced a wide range of pinks to light roses, and there is also a potpourri of native azalea crosses.

The newest area of the garden to be developed is the riverbank, extending 200 feet down to the floodplain of the Yellow River. We constructed a flag-

stone stairway several years ago so Donna could walk the dogs down to the riverbank. Stone benches added later allow for rest stops to enjoy the view. Planted on the bank are both a Holly Springs azalea collection and a large collection of Glenn Dale azaleas, accented by rhododendron hybrids of Russ and Velma Haag and Wayne Hutchins. Across the ravine, space has been left for a Huang azalea collection and a Delp rhododendron planting.

Donna's favorite garden spot is found beside the granite outcrop where she watches the butterflies visit the water gardens. Bird watching areas are found close to the house near the many bird feeders in the side and back yards. The birds love the mature plants to hide and nest in. Hummingbirds can be enjoyed from April through October. Bird and nature watching at the Yellow River can include kingfishers, blue heron, river cooters basking on logs in the sun, and an occasional river otter searching for fish.

Color and fragrance can be found in the Coleman garden 12 months of the year. From March through August, native azaleas bloom in some corner. The best way to view it is to pick a path and meander, enjoying each nook and cranny. And for another perspective, simply turn around and retrace your steps. When you begin to tire, just find a bench, relax, and enjoy the sights and sounds. Above all, Donna and I want everyone to enjoy our garden as much as we do!

Joe and Donna Coleman are both Georgia natives who have lived most of their lives in the metropolitan Atlanta area. Joe, a graduate of Emory University, has maintained a general dental practice in Stone Mountain for the last 31 years. Donna has employed her organizational skills in several professions: as an RN with interest in orthopedics and infection control, as a teacher and director of a day care center, and now works for Hallmark cards. Family, church, and club activities keep them busy.

Earl Sommerville Garden

Roger Duvall — Atlanta, Georgia

You don't notice it right away. The first thing you notice about Earl Sommerville's garden is the color from the camellias in February and the azaleas and rhododendrons from March through July. Then you notice the vigor of the plants, the spotless leaves, the turgid new growth, the multitude of stems on many of the natives. Only then do you realize that you have been walking for half an hour and you haven't seen a single weed. About this time, you realize that Earl does not do things halfway.

This nearly perfect garden is situated at the foot of Little Kennesaw Mountain, just next to Kennesaw Mountain, where a bloody Civil War battle, a prelude to the siege of Atlanta, was fought. Earl's two acres lie less than 1000 feet from the Kennesaw National Battlefield Park. Little Kennesaw is clearly

visible over the 'George Lindley Taber' azaleas at the back of the garden, a beautiful example of borrowed landscape.

The garden includes around 3,000 evergreen azaleas, most of them planted in beds where several of the same variety are grown in mass. Earl prefers the Robin Hills, Southern Indicas (particularly 'George Lindley Taber'), the Girard, and Back Acres hybrids. And speaking of "back achers," Earl sprays the azaleas every week for about six weeks beginning when they first start to show color. This is primarily to prevent petal blight and lace-bug infestation. The evergreens are pruned annually, to knock off the vertical shoots, but they are allowed to grow together, forming unbroken expanses of gently curving green. The plants are well cared for and produce plenty of foli-



What happens when a Japanese azalea (*Rhododendron japonicum*) crosses with a Flame azalea (*R. calendulaceum*)? A delicate pale yellow ball-truss form, found in Earl Sommerville's huge collection of his species azalea hybrids. (Image by Earl Sommerville.)



This *R. canescens* ball-truss form is a natural hybrid from Earl's collection. He selects for the unusual flower formation. (Image by Earl Sommerville.)

age; as a result, they are assets to the garden even when they are not blooming. This is not always the case in Atlanta where azaleas will drop leaves and produce sparse new growth if they are not well watered and properly fertilized. Earl warns, however, not to over fertilize the evergreens.

As a gardener, Earl's first love is his native azaleas and he wants everyone to grow them. They have held up well through the heat and drought of recent years, and when they drop their leaves naturally, they will come back next spring undaunted. There are about 1,000 native azaleas in the garden. Some are relatively pure species, some named hybrids, but most are natural hybrids and their seedlings. Georgia boasts 13 native species, many of them growing in the same region and blooming at the same time. This has created a wealth of natural hybrids. According to Earl, you can hardly find a pure species azalea in Georgia, but he sees this as a virtue, the cross fertilization having produced plants of exceptional vigor and unique beauty.

Gardeners with a special interest in the genus *Rhododendron* or in native plants have been growing native azaleas in Georgia for years, but only recently have the deciduous azaleas become easily available in the large retail nurseries. Earl's advice on growing

these plants successfully is to give them plenty of sun and lots of fertilizer. He prunes when it is required, usually cutting the center stems out to keep them from getting too tall. This also promotes vigorous growth at ground level. The resulting multi-stemmed plants can survive the loss of several stems. Cuttings taken from new stems are also easier to root. Earl prefers to put his natives in the ground in October. He mixes two tablespoons of slow release fertilizer and three or four tablespoons of pelletized lime into the planting medium. Earl has his soil analyzed every two or three years and when it becomes too acidic, he treats the garden with pelletized lime. He has seen the pH as low as 3.9. Native azaleas do best with a pH about 5.6, but never above 6.0. When the pH was too low, Earl's azaleas responded to lime "like it was fertilizer."

Earl is especially interested in breeding native azaleas with ball-truss blooms. To those who argue that ball trusses are the result of culture rather than genetics, Earl answers, "If fertilizer and sun produced ball trusses, all of mine would have them." He insists that there is a strong element of genetics in the formation of ball trusses and collects for this feature. There is no arguing with the fact that he has



Some of Earl's most wonderful hybrids result from crosses of evergreen hybrids with native deciduous species. This specimen shows characteristics of both its parents: the large colorful flower form of an Exbury hybrid and the pink-and-yellow truss form of *R. flammeum*, the Oconee Azalea (previously often called *R. speciosum*). (Image by Earl Sommerville.)

many ball-truss azaleas that would stand out in any garden.

Persian carpet makers are said to introduce a "mistake" intentionally into their best carpets because only God is perfect. Maybe that explains the shoulder-high pokeweed rising above the 'Martha Hitchcock' azaleas and near one of the *Franklinia* trees. Earl's neighbors call his garden Paradise, and maybe a garden like this one is as close as we get.

For More Information

Earl's garden website is www.mindspring.com/~earlsommerville/.



Besides the unusual and strikingly colorful hybrids, Earl's garden is also home to pure species, such as this *R. serrulatum*, the Hammocksweet azalea. (Image by Earl Sommerville.)

Designing with Native Azaleas

Steve Brainerd — Rowlett, Texas

Nature is a wonderful teacher, displaying components of landscape composition for the perceptive landscape designer who is sensitive to the instruction. A talented landscape designer is able to duplicate nature's lessons that evoke human responses through the enlightened placement of constructed amenities and plant materials. The placement of the components of the landscape composition has everything to do with the human body, human mind, and the physical needs of the composite plant material.

Riding on the Blue Ridge Parkway and hiking to Copper Bald during the 2001 convention, delegates were treated to the beauty of the native azaleas, *Rhododendron calendulaceum*, *R. vaseyi*, and *R. arborescens*. The extent of color in the blooming azaleas varied from wispy displays, almost star-like in presentation, to robust, full-bodied spectacles that captured and held the viewer's eye. In analyzing the azalea displays, it was apparent that the sun was a contributing factor to the volume of blooms in any given plant. Azaleas growing in sparse sunlight conditions were sparsely flowered. Heavily blooming azaleas were often seen in exposed locations where sunlight was ample. Nature's placement of native azaleas in a variety of shady and sunlit locations can be mimicked in humanly scripted landscapes to be visually appealing.

Color tends to dominate in our culture's landscape design over other considerations including form, texture, and line, design elements that will be explored later in this article. Color sells, as any retail nurseryman will confirm. It is interesting to compare our culture's focus on color with Japanese garden design, which emphasizes form and tranquility, manipulates texture in combination with a variation of green, and minimizes the use of extreme color contrasts. Our culture's preference as it pertains to the native azaleas will often dictate enhanced color with in-

creased exposure to sunlight that affects the extent of flower bloom and the vibrancy of fall leaf color.

Color wheels are useful in understanding the use of color in the landscape. Cool colors (greens and blues) contrast with the warm colors (yellows and reds) occurring opposite each other on the color wheel. Green is the dominant color in vegetated landscapes, serving as the background for most extensive outdoor spaces. The warm colors are useful in providing focal points, eye-catching elements in landscape design. The warm colors can be seen at long distances and appear to advance in the landscape (appear closer to the viewer than the cool colors). As in painting, landscapes can be designed to catch the viewer's eye (a warm-colored, advancing focal point) in contrast to the predominant green background (a cool-colored, receding frame). The native azaleas can be utilized as focal points while in flower and may serve as frames for other focal points when out of flower. By manipulating the amount of light, a native azalea planting may provide a crescendo of flower color in a sunny area, framed by a feathering of the color into shadier areas utilizing plantings of the identical species.

Form is the physical presentation of the landscape design. An evergreen form may be utilized to screen an objectionable view, block the winter wind, define the perimeter of an outdoor room, or serve as a groundcover to allow viewing and circulation within a space. Sharply vertical forms contrast with horizontal forms and catch the eye when prominent on the horizon. Sculptural forms when contrasted and framed by the background can serve as centerpieces for gardens. Specimen native azaleas may be considered sculptural forms particularly when in bloom, and if displayed properly, when in leaf and defoliated in winter months. *Form should be a primary landscape design consideration before color.*

Texture is the appearance of the structure and detail of the surface of objects. Coarse-textured plants contrast with fine-textured plants and are often effectively used as focal points when framed by fine-textured plants. Coarse-textured plants appear to advance visually towards the observer in the landscape. By manipulating texture, the human perception of spaces can be altered. By providing a coarse-textured plant material in close proximity and fine-textured plant material at a distance, a view may be perceived as more extensive than it is physically. The adroit manipulation of texture in a landscape is high art and is not understood by the general public in the United States. Native azaleas vary from fine to medium in leaf texture and most frequently can be used as the common texture that holds the landscape design together, much as thread holds a cloth together.

Line catches and holds the human eye. Line today is primarily a characteristic of the constructed environment as seen in such examples as roads, bridges, buildings, and railroad tracks. Nature also provides line where water meets soil at a riverbank or ocean beach. Mountain ridges will often display a linear quality. The horizon while at sea and on grasslands in the North American Southwest is linear. Line guides a person along a path. Line can create a mysterious effect, sometimes even frightening, when turning along a path where the view is limited. Line can create a panoramic view when concave and viewed along its edge, often seen in promotional pictures of Hawaiian beaches as the sand extends in an arc away from the camera. Line organizes the landscape, directing the eye, mind, and physical movement of humans in the landscape.

Good landscape design provides both **simplicity** and **complexity**. Nature provided a simplicity and abundance to early explorers of North America who often expressed such ex-

periences as awe-inspiring; however, the mind becomes bored and tired with sameness and demands choice and variety. Early settlers described the great tall-grass prairies of the Midwest as oceans. The Passenger Pigeon flocked in numbers that astounded the observer. Pine forests in the southeastern United States have this abundant quality today that is simple in its presentation, texturally consistent, and unified in color. Good landscape design provides a simplicity and order to the observer. The human mind seeks clarity in perception. Simplicity in design is soothing. Landscape design is enhanced when simply presented at a distance and when the viewer is traveling at high speeds in relation to the landscape.

Complexity should be introduced to the landscape design when the viewer is stationary and is in close proximity. Small details and variation are not perceived at a distance; only when the observer advances close to the landscape planting does the variation become noticeable and available for study. Native azaleas occurring in swarms exercise both aspects of human perception. Amassed from a distance, native azaleas in flower provide appealing color that can be awe-inspiring. Upon close examination, however, the variation in flower color becomes the collector's quest.

Nature demands the attention of successful gardeners. Being a student of nature will enhance the placement of native azaleas in our gardens and contribute to the enjoyment of our North American heritage.

Steve Brainerd is a former president of the Azalea Society of America. He is completing a Master of Landscape Architecture degree at the University of Texas at Arlington. He was recently the recipient of a Certificate of Merit from the American Society of Landscape Architecture for scholastic achievement; was inducted into Sigma Lambda Alpha, a national scholastic honor society; and was awarded a Richard B. Myrick scholarship. He is the Parks Development Superintendent for the City of McKinney, Texas.

Research Notes

Ben Morrison Chapter — US National Arboretum Project: Conserving Old Azalea Varieties Bob McWhorter — Gambrills, Maryland

Barbara Bullock, Curator of Azaleas and Rhododendrons at the U.S. National Arboretum (USNA), was the featured speaker at a Ben Morrison chapter meeting on February 4, 2001. Her presentation was about her efforts to restore USNA azalea gardens, to identify as many of the azaleas as possible, and to perpetuate the oldest varieties in the collection. As part of this effort, she distributed a list of the oldest varieties at the USNA and offered the chapter an opportunity to obtain cuttings from them.

Barbara's plan was to have chapter members become registered sources of these azaleas for the USNA as a backup source in the event the USNA plants died out. She asked that good records be kept of the names of the members who took the cuttings, the varieties they took, and that quality labels and coated wire be used to identify each cutting and subsequent plant.

On July 13, two days before the Ben Morrison chapter cutting picnic, Bob and Rosa McWhorter, Dave and Eileen Holm, and Joe Miller met with Barbara Bullock at the USNA and obtained cuttings from the list that she had provided. A list of the cuttings taken by the chapter is shown on page 86.

Bob and Rosa McWhorter have one complete set of the cuttings that have been started. Dave and Eileen Holm, who run a wholesale azalea business from their home, have a misting system that yields a high percentage of plants from cuttings. They generously offered to take the remaining cuttings and start them.

Chapter members will meet at the Holm's residence next year to pot up all the new plants. Following this, additional chapter members will

"adopt" plants they want and register themselves as auxiliary sources with the USNA. In addition, some of the excess plants propagated in this way will find their way to the 2004 ASA National Convention that will be hosted by the Ben Morrison Chapter.

This project would not have been possible without Barbara Bullock's detailed knowledge of the USNA collection. She provided a great overview of the history of the arboretum azalea gardens and her work with them. She knows the gardens like the back of her hand. This is perhaps made easier by a very good database that she has established that is cross-referenced to garden maps. Because of these records, Barbara was able to go to the precise spots and find all the plants that the chapter had selected in advance. She also let us do some "inspiration shopping" and to take some additional cuttings not previously requested.

We had a wonderful day and obtained an excellent group of cuttings that will yield plants that will enhance chapter gardens in years to come, meanwhile ensuring the USNA will have sources for its azaleas for the indefinite future. The chapter has already discussed the possibility of returning next year to work with Barbara on this project. We regard both the US National Arboretum and Barbara Bullock as national treasures and are grateful for her professionalism, kindness, and friendship.

Bob McWhorter is the current president of the Ben Morrison chapter.

Azalea Society of America – Ben Morrison Chapter

U.S. National Arboretum Azalea Cuttings – July 13, 2001

List of Plants on file with the USNA Plant Records Office

The following *Rhododendron* cultivars and /or species were taken, and will be raised by:

Bob and Rosa McWhorter
1666 Preakness Drive
Gambrills, MD 21054

David and Eileen Holm
1530 Sixes Road
Prince Frederick, MD 20678

Joe and Nuran Miller
23730 Kingston Village Rd.
California, MD 20619

Mr. McWhorter is the current president of the Ben Morrison Chapter of the Azalea Society of America, and arranged for his chapter to come to the USNA to take these cuttings. Members of the chapter will raise these in permanent gardens with permanent labels. The USNA is welcome to take cuttings should something happen to the original plants. Approximately 10 cuttings of each were taken. The numbers shown before each cultivar name are National Arboretum accession numbers, used to record entries into the plant collections.

57079-H	<i>Rhododendron eriocarpum</i>	270-H	R. 'Higashi Yama' (Kurume)
8039-H	<i>R. indica atropurpurea</i> [1-R-11]	4182-H	R. 'Hokorobi' (also 4182-CJ, Kurume)
7044-H	<i>R. macrosepalum</i> var. <i>linearifolium</i> (now <i>R. stenopetalum</i> var. <i>linearifolium</i>)	4163-H	R. 'Ima shojo' (Kurume)
1175-H	R. '151-G' (Gable)	6094-J	R. 'Iroha yama' (Kurume)
66851-H	R. 'Anthem' (Glenn Dale)	216-J	R. 'Kagaribi' (Kurume)
4177-H	R. 'Aya-no-kamuri' (Kurume)	45419-H	R. 'Kagura' (Kurume)
4162-H	R. 'Beni Kirishima' (Kurume)	4158-H	R. 'Kocho no mai' (Kurume)
63755-H	R. 'Blushing Maid' (Glenn Dale)	4185-H	R. 'Kogasane' (Kurume)
68718-H,J	R. 'Buncho' (Satsuki)	4157-H	R. 'Koshikibu' (Kurume)
9294-H	R. 'Colleen' (Glenn Dale)	66878-H	R. 'Madeira' (Glenn Dale)
30782-?	R. 'Dauntless' (Glenn Dale)	66277-J	R. 'Madrigal' (Glenn Dale)
8828-H,V	R. 'Dragon'	54466-CH	R. 'Maihime' (Satsuki)
45415-H	R. 'Ezonishiki' (Kurume)	276-H	R. 'Mikawa Murasaki' (Kurume)
17862-H	R. 'Flirtation' (Beltsville)	9328-H	R. 'Minstrel' (Glenn Dale)
66870-HG	R. 'Grenadier' (Glenn Dale)	18530-J	R. 'Modesty' (Glenn Dale)
45422-H	R. 'Gunki' (Kurume)	4156-H	R. 'Momiji Gasane' (Kurume)
4186-H	R. 'Hana Asobi' (Kurume)	206-H	R. 'Momozono' (Kurume)
45435-H,V	R. 'Haruno Sato' (Kurume)	34156-H	R. 'Morgana' (Glenn Dale)
4183-H	R. 'Hatsunami' (Kurume)	2631-H	R. 'Niagara' (Glenn Dale)
		4933-T	R. 'Nubian' (Glenn Dale)
		208-H	R. 'Ogikasane' (Blaauw Kurume)
		8881-H	R. 'Pink Ice' (Belgian Glenn Dale)
		68733-H	R. 'Rice Kernel'
		9342-CH	R. 'Rising Sun' (Glenn Dale)
		269-CH	R. 'Sakura kagami' (Kurume)
		68957-H	R. 'Salmon Elf' (Beltsville Dwarf)
		4161-H	R. 'Shiro Satsuki' (Kurume)
		69-H	R. 'Shishu' (Mucronatum)
		66788-H	R. 'Snowscape' (Glenn Dale)
		4176-H	R. 'Surisumi' (Kurume)
		48419-H	R. 'Tanager' (Glenn Dale)
		66286-H	R. 'Tomboy' (Glenn Dale)
		4164-CH	R. 'Tsuta Momiji' (Kurume)
		274-H	R. 'Usuyo' (Mucronatum group)
		8013-H	R. 'Vickie' (Gable)
		9358-CH	R. 'White Star' (Gable)
		32885-P	R. 'Winedrop' (Glenn Dale)
		4160-H	R. 'Yaeshojo' (Kurume)
		32888-H	R. 'Zealot' (Glenn Dale)

Society News

Report of the Nominating Committee

David Nanney — Springfield, Virginia

The following are offered as candidates for the Society's Board of Directors for the period 2002-2004: Margie Jenkins, Bob Hobbs, and Don Voss. Biographies follow, showing their long interest in azaleas and the purposes and goals of the Azalea Society of America.

Our thanks to the Nominating Committee: David Nanney, chair, and members John Brown, Buddy Lee, and for the assistance of President Joe Schild in developing this proposed slate. Please vote for these directors on the ballot shown on the inside back cover of this issue of **THE AZALEAN**, as well as your vote for the best article published in **THE AZALEAN** in 2001. Mail the ballot back to Secretary, Azalea Society of America by March 1, 2002.

John Brown
1000 Moody Bridge Road
Cleveland, SC 29635

Margie Y. Jenkins is a well-known nurserywoman from Amite, Louisiana. Margie Jenkins and her late husband, Bryant, started a wholesale nursery over 25 years ago with the

goal of growing native and unusual plants not normally found in wholesale nurseries. Through the years, her passion has paid off and Margie has become recognized throughout the industry for her insight and expertise in growing and selecting unique forms of trees and shrubs, especially evergreen and deciduous azaleas. She is always willing to share her knowledge. Margie is an active member of numerous horticultural organizations and is a charter member of the Louisiana Chapter of the Azalea Society of America. Recently she was awarded the James A. Foret Award from the Louisiana Nursery and Landscape Association in recognition of her service, dedication, and outstanding contributions to the Louisiana green industry.

Robert W. (Bob) Hobbs is a retired astronomer and aerospace engineering manager. He has served the Azalea Society of America in several capacities: he was president of the Ben Morrison Chapter (1986-1987), national vice president (1987-1988) and president (1988-1999), and he and his

wife Belinda (Bee) were editor and associate editor of **THE AZALEAN** from 1989 to 1998. Bob and Bee have an azalea garden at their home in North Beach, Maryland. He is a long-time member of the Ben Morrison Chapter.

Donald H. Voss was an international economist (12 years teaching and 28 years with the Federal government). He served in the Army Transportation Corps of World War II and remained in the Army reserve for over 20 years, retiring from the reserve as a lieutenant colonel. Following retirement from government service, his interest in horticulture and botany has led to 13 years of volunteer work in the US National Arboretum herbarium (not the herb garden!). He served the Azalea Society of America as president of the Northern Virginia Chapter, as chairman of the Board of Directors, and as a reviewer and frequent contributor to **THE AZALEAN**. Don has been a long-time member of the Northern Virginia Chapter.



VISIT ITALY WITH YOUR ASA FRIENDS!

My name is Piero Sambucci, and I am an ASA member, specializing in nursery grown azaleas, camellias, and rhododendrons. I live in Velletri, a small city 25 miles from the center of Rome and located in the famed Alban Hills formed by an ancient volcano, now extinct. Two beautiful crater lakes are 10 miles from Velletri, and 20 miles to the south lies the Mediterranean Sea with its wonderful beaches. Tivoli is only an hour's drive away with the Villa d'Este, famous for its gardens and fountains. Two hours away are Naples, Pompeii, and Sorrento, and Florence is three hours away.

I propose to rent my house from June through February for two-week intervals to members of the ASA and their friends. To make your vacation relaxed and comfortable I will provide you with continental breakfast and dinner, plus transportation with a van every day of your vacation. I will meet you at the airport when you arrive, and from then on I will look after you, take you to cities, parks and gardens of central Italy. At home in the evenings you will find dinner ready (Italian food). You will get the real taste of Italy.

Form a group of four or five and come to the country of art and natural beauty. For a brochure contact Piero Sambucci, C/DA Acqua Palomba 2, 00049 Velletri, Roma, Italy. Tel.: 0329 628 74 74; Fax: 06 963 50 77; Email: psambucci@allnet.it

In Memory

Dr. August Kehr

(Contributors to this eulogy include John Brown, Ray Head, Mary Lou Kehr, Bob Stelloh, and John Weagle, Ed.)

Dr. August E. Kehr died peacefully in Cedar Falls, Iowa, on September 27, 2001, never waking up from a nap as he was making plans to attend the upcoming convention of the American Magnolia Society in Maryland. While it is comforting to know he died as gently as he lived, he leaves a great void in the world of azaleas, rhododendrons, and magnolias.

It is impossible to adequately document who and what made up the life and times of the man who quietly led, advised, and was a large part of the success of the American Rhododendron Society, the Azalea Society of America, and the American Magnolia Society. Please accept the limitations of space and competency as we make this group effort.

First and foremost, Augie was a genuinely nice person. Gentle, kind, thoughtful, giving, and sharing all come to mind to anyone who was fortunate enough to have been in contact with him. When a dozen people were asked for input for an earlier article, each reply had the phrase, within a word of two, "Augie was the kindest, most gentle person I have ever met." In their correspondence, he and Ernest Yelton had mentioned how much enjoyment plants had given them over the years, and even more important, the enjoyment they had received from the people that grew the plants.

He always had too many new ideas to worry about crosses not made or goals not met. Ray Head mentioned, "I realized several years ago that Augie was operating on a different level than anyone I had known in the field of plants. He would spend hours sharing information with others and make them feel comfortable and welcome while they were there."

Born in Frankfort, Kentucky, and moving to Unadilla, New York, at a very early age, Augie was a much-published researcher with sterling credentials. His Doctorate in Genetics from Cornell University with minors in Plant Pathology and Cytology led him to positions on the faculties of Louisiana State University and Iowa State University. Beginning in 1958, he served at the U.S. Department of Agriculture, in the Agricultural Research Service as scientist and administrator, including two overseas programs under the Agency for International Development.

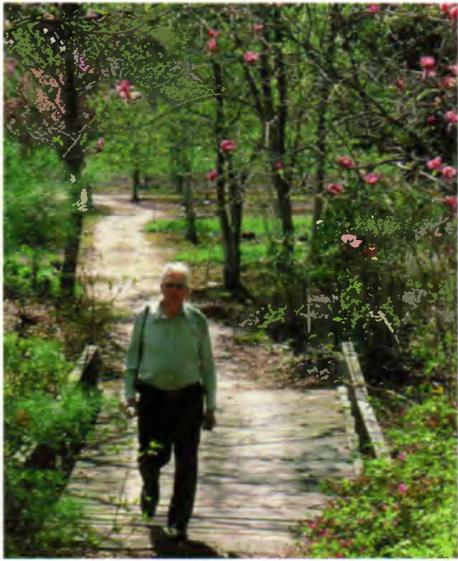
When he retired from government service in 1978, he and Mary Lou moved to Herdersonville, North Carolina, living, appropriately, on Tranquility Lane. There, with Mary Lou's active support, he continued his plant research activities, including the use of colchicine and pre-emergent herbicides to induce polyploidy in rhododendrons and magnolias. He also continued his sharing of information and plants. John Weagle wrote "When I attended the ARS Convention in Asheville in 1994 he invited me to visit his magnolia plantation when the crowds had dissipated. We spent the morning going through his collection and he explained exactly what he was up to with his project and the parentage of everything. He held the ladder while I climbed up to photograph many of them. When I was leaving, in typical fashion, he presented me with some of his best that he had grafted for me well in advance of the convention. This I didn't realize until I got home and read my name on all the original labels."

Hybridizing was a large part of Augie's life after his retirement. Among his goals were the development of a yellow evergreen azalea and a yellow magnolia. He named only a few of the many hybrids he produced and evaluated. His registered rhododendrons include *Rhododendron* 'April

Pink' (fragrant, early light pink); *R.* 'Mountain Marriage' (indumented pink, very hardy); *R.* 'Southland' (floriferous dwarf salmon elepidote); *R.* 'Carolina Gold' (pale yellow, and otherwise similar to *R. carolinianum*); *R.* 'Double Gem' (deep yellow, double-flowered elepidote); *R.* 'Pink Magic' (deep pink dwarf); *R.* 'Augie Kehr' (deep yellow, double-flowered elepidote); *R.* 'Blue Target' (deep blue); and *R.* 'Epoch', a white tetraploid *R. carolinianum* widely used in hybridization efforts. His azaleas included *R.* 'White Rosebud', *R.* 'Anna Kehr', *R.* 'Mary Lou Kehr', *R.* 'Janet Flick', *R.* 'Great Expectations', *R.* 'King Red', and *R.* 'Terry'. Since these cultivars were only a very small percentage of his crosses, you might think he would have been satisfied. On the contrary, his work on magnolias produced 31 beautiful named hybrids that are just now coming onto the market, including *Magnolia* 'Sunspire', a deep yellow magnolia featured on the cover of the August 2001 Wayside Gardens catalog.

A few years ago he entered a spray of *R.* 'Blue Target' at the Southeastern Chapter-ARS flower show and won Best in Show. He was both pleased and somewhat embarrassed, confiding, "Actually, I have an even better blue I've been working on."

Augie had pursued the elusive goal of a yellow evergreen azalea for many years. It was one of the few projects he continued to work toward when he and Mary Lou moved to a retirement home in August 2000, and again after their most recent move to Iowa. There, just days before he died, he was quite excited about a deciduous-evergreen polyploid cross, which had budded yellow and may be fertile. Mary Lou Kehr commented, "During that week he saw the azalea bloom and it still is beautiful. However, he was somewhat disappointed. It is more pink than yellow. He decided it needed more work on it. As the beautiful little



Dr. August Kehr, seen leaving his magnolia garden, was always a horticulturist with a project and a man of action. Magnolias were among his many collections that he studied, cared for, and shared with his many friends in the horticultural world. (Photo kindly supplied by Jan Flick, August's daughter.)

blooms mature, more yellow does appear, but it may not be the answer. We can be sure he would have continued to work on it."

Perhaps less well known was the very broad range of his plant hybridizing activities. Some of the other goals he had worked toward were seedless paw paws, heat tolerant rhubarb, and most recently, self-fertile hollies. He considered his discovery that pollen could be frozen for later use to be his most important contribution.

A few of his positions within the American Rhododendron Society include National President-ARS, founding committee of the ARS Research Foundation, first chairman of the ARS Research Committee, and organizer of the International Rhododendron meeting in 1978. He was awarded the Pioneer Award-ARS, one of only seven ever awarded, all to giants of the plant world, including Joe Gable and most recently, Lionel de Rothschild. He was also awarded the Gold Medal-ARS. At the local level, he had been president of the Southeastern Chapter-ARS, a recipient of the Bronze Medal, and the leader and supporter of many efforts within the chapter,

including the complete revamping of their flower show scheduling along genus/species lines.

He was also quite active in the Azalea Society of America, and was a founding member of the new Vaseyi Chapter in Hendersonville, North Carolina, in 2001. He mentioned once that he would have liked to be a founding member of the Azalea Society at the national level, but since he was the president of the ARS, he did not join at the time because he felt it could be considered as being disloyal to the ARS.

Augie's work in establishing the ARS Research Foundation was just a beginning. At the Southeastern Chapter-ARS picnic and auction on July 2000, he donated a part of his collection of books, artworks, and papers to the Magnolia Research Foundation he had recently help to found. Bidding was fast and furious and resulted in a donation of almost \$1,000 to the Magnolia Society. And he didn't stop there. Just before moving to Iowa in August 2001, Augie began working with Bob Stelloh on the formation of a research foundation for the Azalea Society, and had agreed to serve with Bob as the co-chairman of the Foundation Committee. He firmly believed that ongoing plant research was an essential part of the role of any plant society.

The Azalea Society does not yet have a Research Foundation. However, it may be fitting to make a donation in his honor to the Azalea Society of American to be used as "seed money" when it is established.

Nathan Fitts

With sadness we mourn the loss of one of the Society's founding members, Nathan C. Fitts, who died at his home in Potomac, Maryland, on September 27. Alice Johnson Holland, who was the founding secretary of the Azalea Society of America and knew Nate Fitts as a member of the organizing committee and the original Board of Governors remembers: "Nate was part of the original group that met at

the Brookside Gardens Library to form the Society. He did much of the original work on the aims, purpose and By-Laws, but had to drop out for health reasons. His work was completed by Bill Parsons (also deceased)." Nathan was a CIA Intelligence Officer from 1953 until 1978, when he retired. His retirement hobby was propagating azalea cuttings with his wife for their garden.

Mr. Fitts was born in Springfield, Massachusetts. He was a graduate of Amherst College and Harvard University Law School. He also received a Master's degree in law from Georgetown University. Survivors include his wife of 59 years, Isabel P. Fitts, two sons and two granddaughters.

Shirley Grant

Ben Morrison Chapter regretfully reports the passing of member Shirley Grant on November 8, 2001.

Donald W. Hager

Northern Virginia Chapter reported the passing on October 8 of Donald W. Hager. He was 82. Dave Nanney described him this way in the November issue of "The Azalea Clipper": "Don was very active in the early years of our chapter, hosting meetings, running plant sales, and generally encouraging all of us to collect and enjoy azaleas. I still use and enjoy his catalog from 1984. Leslie and I acquired so many of our Satsuki azaleas as one-year cuttings from Don. Don established his nursery in Spotsylvania, overcoming various obstacles, including a severe drought that exhausted his well with obvious consequences. Don was one of the key people in getting Leslie and me deeply into this collection mess. He will be missed." Don worked with azaleas for 45 years; besides developing and running the nursery in Spotsylvania County, he hybridized and named 40 or 50 of his hybrids; 24 are listed in Galle. He was a past chapter president and a major supporter of the Society. He is survived by his wife of 59 years, Alvera, and three daughters.

Chapter News

Ben Morrison Chapter
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Norman and Jean Beaudry presented the October 14 meeting program on dwarf conifers and ornamental trees. They have been collecting since 1976 and now have a sizable collection of their own, plus photographs of great collections in the US, Canada, England, and Holland. After the program, chapter members brainstormed with 2004 Convention chairwoman Carol Segree about ideas for the convention, covering such topics as theme, speakers, garden tours, and other activities. If you have ideas to contribute to Carol, contact her at 301-261-6215 or csegree@msn.com.

The Christmas meeting was December 9 at the home of Dale and Carol Flowers.

Upcoming events to watch for: London Town Garden has invited the chapter to participate in a plant sale May 11, 2002. A chapter flower show has been proposed; Chapter President Bob McWhorter will discuss details with London Town's Horticultural Program Manager, Mollie Rideout.

Bob McWhorter has also instituted a "Chapter Garden Tours by Internet" idea. This enables those with Internet access a way to view "photo albums" of member gardens. To try it for yourself, visit the website www.clubphoto.com. When asked to enter the name of a friend, type in mcwho@erols.com and hit the enter key. You will see two photo albums: Ben Morrison Chapter and Rosa Gardens. Click on either album and "thumbnail" (miniature) pictures will be displayed. Double click on any thumbnail picture and you will see an enlarged view. The first album shows photos of chapter activities, the second is a tour of the McWhorter's garden in 2001. When you have finished

viewing these albums you can create a new album, which will be displayed with the other two. The photo albums will be displayed at clubphoto for one year, although Bob may extend the time period. He would like to create a link from the ASA website to the clubphoto website so that prospective members could view gardens and chapter activities. More information as it becomes available.

Brookside Gardens Chapter

Reported by: William C. Miller III

Meeting December 3, 2001, the chapter unanimously approved the following as officers for 2002:

President — Dr. Charles Evans
Vice-President — Mary Rutley
Treasurer — Dottie Murphree
Corresponding Secretary — Roberta Hagen
Recording Secretary — Dianne Gregg

Don Hyatt was awarded the F.P. Lee Commendation for 2001.

Northern Virginia Chapter

Frances Louer, Corresponding Secretary
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The annual plant sale and auction held September 9 at the home of Sharon and Dave Raden was an opportunity to introduce members' friends to the benefits of Society membership. That is, to visit a lovely garden and to be able to purchase member-tested azaleas that have proven successful in the local area. Members in attendance also shared refreshments and told their "objectives" for Society membership.

The October 14 program was entitled "Time for Tech Talk: Databases, Spreadsheets, Digital Photography, Mapping." Phil Louer, Leslie Nanney, and Barry Sperling presented a program on how useful computers can be in "organizing and enjoying azalea gardening." Phil demonstrated how

he uses his to catalog and identify all the azaleas in the Louer garden. Leslie presented a different management system she is developing to organize the Nanney garden. Barry has designed links into his database to points in a map of his yard, thus identifying plants in his garden. In the future Barry wants to link these records with digital pictures. Phil, Barry, and Jerry Connolly all contributed ideas for using digital cameras as garden tools. Finally, Phil showed how a GPS (global positioning satellite) device could be used to precisely locate azaleas in a garden.

November 18, Colin Stewart presented "Insects in Our Gardens." Stewart is a Professor of Entomology at the University of Maryland and a contributor to the December 1990 issue of THE AZALEAN. He used models and computer graphics to explain the appearance, behavior, and life cycles of insects and arachnids that are of special interest to azalea growers. Pesticides are most effective at specific pest growth stages, and their effect on beneficial insects should be considered before application.

Oconee Chapter

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Sunday, November 11, the chapter celebrated its 10th anniversary at the Rockdale County Extension Service in Conyers, Georgia. The chapter was formed in 1991 by "considerable efforts by Jim Thornton, Monty Laster, and others." The first meeting was October 20, 1991.

The anniversary program featured a video of the chapter's very first meeting about "Propagating Azaleas From Seeds." The original panel who gave this program — Ray Goza, Allison Fuqua, James Harris, and Joe Coleman — were invited back to com-

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NEW MEMBERS

We welcome the following new members who have joined the Society as of December 10, 2001.

At-Large Members

Joan M. George
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ment on their present approaches to the topic. Society President Joe Schild, also known as "Azalea Joe" spoke on native azaleas. The chapter elected officers for 2002-2004, celebrated with anniversary cake, and continued planning efforts for the big joint ARS/ASA convention in Atlanta, April 17-21, 2002. Note that volunteers are needed to help.

The October 2001 newsletter contained a complete listing of all chapter officers, presentations made to all

10 years of meetings, and all articles featured in the chapter newsletter. Quite a document. Two of the chapter objectives have been consistently addressed by speakers and articles: 1) principles of hybridization, propagation, culture, and care of azaleas, and 2) promoting interest in and exchange of knowledge about the azalea, its forms and uses. Topics have ranged from pollinating the azalea, the Nearing propagation frame, species azalea sources, fungi attacks in Geor-

gia azaleas, and surfing the Internet. Contact Frank Bryan if you would like copies of the entire listing.

Jim Thornton reported the following new officer elections:

President – John Callaway
Vice-President – Allison Fuqua
Secretary – Ruth Bryan
Treasurer – Fred Vick
Newsletter Editor – Frank Bryan
Public Relations/Membership –
Jim Thornton