

Chapter News

Ben Morrison Chapter

Bob Hobbs, Newsletter Editor:
rwhobbs@mindspring.com
Carol Flowers, Co-editor:
dflowers@bellatlantic.net

February 3, 2002, Bob Hobbs gave a presentation called "Help! I'm Trying to Understand Hybrid Groups." As he indicated in the most recent "Azalea Alert!" he tried to make this more of an audience participation event, since he asked members to come prepared to share observations on hybrid groups and their favorite azaleas within those groups. Gray Carter followed this up with a "hands-on" demonstration on propagating azaleas from seed.

Upcoming Events: March 3, the meeting focused on garden mapping and the automation of plant records. Featured speakers were: Barry Sperling, vice-president of the Northern Virginia Chapter—creating links between azalea plant database records and digital photographs; Barbara Bullock, Curator of the Azalea and Rhododendron Collection at the US National Arboretum—the development of the record keeping of the National Arboretum azalea collections; and Charles and Wanda Hanners—digital photograph records of their azalea collections at Azalea Trace.

May 11, there will be a flower show at London Towne Gardens, to be judged by the public. Charles and Wanda Hanners will provide plants on consignment for sale, and Carol Segree and Joe Miller volunteered to help.

2004 Convention Planning: Since the Ben Morrison Chapter is hosting the 2004 ASA Convention, Carol Segree and Bob McWhorter asked for ideas about theme, speakers, garden tours, and other activities to put into the "early planning stages." Carol, Bob

and Rosa McWhorter are looking for a hotel in the Annapolis, Maryland, area. If you have input to share with Carol, who is convention coordinator, call her at 301-261-6215 or e-mail her at csegree@msn.com.

Research Papers Archive: Joan Sweeney is researching potential "archival homes" for chapter members' research papers on azalea horticulture. She is focusing on sites that have experience with horticultural research. Ellen Hartranft at the Brookside Gardens Library, Wheaton Regional Park, Montgomery, Maryland, advised Joan to approach a facility with the staff, budget, and the mission to provide maximum access to the research data, that is, a facility that would catalog and scan the data and then allow online access to this information. Ellen suggested the US National Arboretum Library and the National Agriculture Library as candidate facilities. Joan will report back after contacting staff at these organizations.

Update on Azalea Conservation Project: Dave and Eileen Holm reported on the portion of cuttings they received from the cuttings taken from the US National Arboretum. They stuck 100 percent of the cuttings, using Root-tone, sphagnum peat, and Perlite. They had 10 flats, of 50-60 cuttings each. Placed under their Mist-a-matic, 95 percent of the cuttings rooted within five weeks. They are over-wintering in the upstairs of their garage, out of the weather, but getting about three hours of direct sun, and nine hours of Grow-light. In November, they got a feeding of weak liquid fertilizer, and they have been lightly watered since. They estimate they have 80-90 percent live plants now, covering all the varieties except the linearifolium. The latter rooted well but has subsequently died.

They will transfer the rooted cuttings to 4-inch pots in May, to make sure that the rooted cuttings "hit bottom" more quickly, forcing them to stimulate better above-ground growth. After this intermediate step, the plants will be "bumped up" to 1-gallon pots by the spring of 2003. The plan is for a second generation of cuttings to be made from these 1-gallon plants in spring of 2003, with two or three of each variety being held back as "stock plants" for this purpose. The remainder will be made available for adoption by chapter members, sold at a chapter plant sale, or grown on for one or more seasons. The second-year plants and those saved for cuttings in 2003 should make fine 2-gallon plants for 2004.

Northern Virginia Chapter

Frances Louer, Corresponding Secretary
plouer@msn.com

February 24, 2002, Barbara Bullock, Curator of the Azalea and Rhododendron Collection at the US National Arboretum reviewed the key events in the history of that wonderful facility. Because of the many Azalea Society of America members directly involved in the development of the azalea collections at the Arboretum, here is the summary timeline from "The Azalea Clipper":

Mid-1920s — B.Y. Morrison, then employed by the Glenn Dale Plant Introduction Station, begins hybridizing azaleas at his home in Takoma Park.

March 4, 1927 — The US National Arboretum is established by an act of Congress.

1930 — Morrison was Chief, Division of Plant Exploration and Introduction at the US Plant Introduction Station, Glenn Dale, Maryland.

1946-1947 — Approximately 15,000 azaleas from B.Y. Morrison's top 1200 selections of azalea crosses are planted on seven acres of the southern flank of Mt. Hamilton in the US National Arboretum.

1949 — The Arboretum's first opening for the azalea display, and Morrison was assigned full time to the Arboretum July 1.

September 1952 — Dr. Henry T. Skinner appointed second Director of the Arboretum. He was an azalea enthusiast. Especially favoring the native azaleas, he was responsible for the extensive planting of native and deciduous azaleas in Azalea Valley.

1952-1962 — Azalea Valley was extensively planted with deciduous azaleas, including Knap Hill, Mollis, Exbury, Ghent, and American species.

May 3, 19 — Morrison Garden at the Arboretum dedicated. Designed by B.Y. Morrison, this garden displays the Glenn Dale azalea hybrids that he selected and introduced.

1966-1972 — Volunteer Dr. Roy Magruder, retired Beltsville scientist,

worked very hard on assessing the Glenn Dales in the Arboretum collection and on acquiring missing cultivars. He also evaluated the gardens and made specific suggestions for cultural improvements that were acted upon over the next 10 years.

April 1971 — Dedication of the Lee Azalea Garden to honor the late Frederic P. Lee, who served as chairman for the Arboretum's advisory committee for over 20 years and published *The Azalea Book* in 1958. This garden contains late-blooming (June) azaleas, mainly Satsuki.

January 1973 — Dr. John Creech was appointed the third Director of the US National Arboretum. He was responsible for acquiring azaleas and other plant material on plant exploration trips to Japan and Korea.

May 21, 1981 — Dr. Marc Cathey appointed as fourth Director of the Arboretum.

1990 — Barbara L. Bullock begins as fifth Curator of the Arboretum's azalea collections.

[The February issue of "The Azalea Clipper" also contained an overview of the George Harding Memorial Azalea Garden at RiverFarm. This will be reprinted in an upcoming issue soon, Ed.]

Oconee Chapter

Frank Bryan, Newsletter Editor
rudie2rudie@aol.com

All hands have been working hard to help set up the 2002 convention in Atlanta, April 17-21. Ruth and Frank Bryan are coordinating volunteers for the many special activities. Help was requested for the registration and information desk April 17-19, plant sale set up April 16, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. and tear down, April 22, 8 a.m. to 12 noon plant sales, and to work the sales area April 17-21. There were also opportunities for tour bus captains.

Note especially that there was a Convention Store and a Trade Show area for nursery owners and green industry products. Both were open on the same schedule as the plant sales times.

Legacy-continued

distribution. At present they are growing in the Polly Hill Arboretum.

Among my plant introductions other than rhododendron that originated with material from Dr. Rokujo are:

- *Ilex crenata* 'Muffin', 66-018, from seed
- *Magnolia hypoleuca* 'Lydia', 66-004, rooted
- *R. metternichii* from Oki Islands, about 20 plants, 67-001, from seed
- *R. dauricum* 'Album', no selections, 68-001

Reference

For more information on North Tisbury hybrids, see also: Hill, Polly. 1991. "North Tisbury Nakaharae Azaleas." *The Azalean*. 13 (4): 71-74.

Polly Hill has retired from 40 years of horticulture. In 1957, she began work on what is now called the Polly Hill Arboretum when she was 50 years old and she and her husband inherited her family's 40-acre sheep farm in the North Tisbury area of Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts. She has been using the farm as a summer home since the 1930s. Inspired by the beautiful landscape, she decided to create an arboretum there by growing trees from seed. A few courses in botany at the University of Delaware and some at Longwood Gardens in Pennsylvania encouraged her. A year of teaching in Japan after graduation and various trips through the years introduced her to new varieties of azaleas and rhododendrons not grown in the US, especially the ground cover azaleas. She and her husband developed the farm and bred, selected, trialed, and introduced new rhododendrons and aza-

leas. She has over 2,000 different plants in the living collection, all with labels and detailed histories. She has personally introduced over 83 new cultivars from her work in Martha's Vineyard. Among these are the North Tisbury azaleas, but dogwoods, hollies, magnolias, and Stewartia are also key collections. Polly still keeps a home on the grounds that she calls the Cow Barn, and she still visits when she can.

The **Polly Hill Arboretum** is a not-for-profit institution established in 1996 by a cooperative effort of the Vineyard Conservation Society, medical researcher and conservationist Dr. David H. Smith, the Hill family, and many of Polly's horticultural colleagues. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts joined in preserving the 60-acre Arboretum property by providing for a conservation restriction, which will prevent development of

continued on page 20