

The Evergreen Azalea Cultivar 'Brookside Delight' — One of Life's Little Mysteries

William C. Miller III — Bethesda, Maryland

Description

This article announces the introduction of *Rhododendron* 'Brookside Delight', a 2-3/4- to 3-1/8-inch (7-8 cm), single, hose-in-hose, variably light purplish pink flower with a frilled edge and an occasional light reddish purple stripe, flake, or sector. It blooms in early May. Lacking a discernible foliaceous calyx, it has two whorls of five petals, five to seven stamens with light filaments and dark anthers, and two to three flowers per head. The spotting in the blotch region is pink but grays with age, becoming increasingly inconspicuous (see Figure 1). The leaves are dimorphic and shiny when new. Typical spring leaves average 2 inches (5 cm) long by 7/8 inch (2.3 cm) wide (see

Figure 2). The leaf shape is elliptic, the apex is acute, the base is cuneate, and the margin is entire. The spring leaves are larger than the summer leaves and turn yellow, providing an interesting element of fall color. A close examination of the leaves reveals an occasional stripe or flake of color resembling the stripe in the flower petal (see Figure 3). This color in the leaves becomes more evident in the fall as the chlorophyll declines. Originally developed at the Glenn Dale Plant Introduction Station as a selection from Cross #10, it should be classified as a USDA hybrid.

Origin

I first saw what was to become known as 'Brookside Delight', in full

bloom, in Dr. Bruce Parliman's front yard in Bowie, Maryland. Dr. Parliman was the location leader at Glenn Dale (the Glenn Dale Plant Introduction Station at Glenn Dale, Maryland) and the federal official through whom the Azalea Society of America sponsored the Glenn Dale Preservation Project (1). Of the numerous progeny, Clones A through L, resulting from Cross #10 that still exist along Creech's Row at the Glenn Dale Plant Introduction Station, this one apparently caught Dr. Parliman's eye (2). Begun as a cutting from the original plant, Dr. Parliman's specimen was then 6 feet tall, had begun to cascade, and was in full bloom. In passing, Bruce asked me what I thought of it. I think I said something



1. 'Brookside Delight', an evergreen USDA hybrid and sister seedling to 'Mrs. LBJ'.
2. Typical spring leaves.
3. Spring leaves (yellow) showing fall color, with occasional stripes and sectors of color.

like "it was really pretty." When asked if I thought it was good enough to introduce, I responded, "Yes." The echo had not died on my reply when he said, "Introduce it." Caught somewhat off guard, I stressed that the honor of naming it should be his. Recognizing my association with the Brookside Gardens chapter of the ASA, he offered 'Brookside Delight'.

When asked what there was about this azalea that warranted his interest, Dr. Parlman responded that the plant at Glenn Dale was a large floriferous plant with large, open-faced flowers. The petals were of good substance (thick) and a very pretty pastel color. He recounted a dark and stormy day one spring at Glenn Dale when the flowers seemed to "vibrate" with color. From a horticultural standpoint, it was a tough plant that was easy to propagate. It was quite vigorous, prone to long stem growth, and thrived when just left alone.

There are a number of loose ends in this story. Initially, I had difficulty discovering to whom Cross #10 belonged and what the parentage was. While the records at Glenn Dale gave no clue, the timing was such to suggest that the cross belonged to Dr. John Creech (Glenn Dale Superinten-

dent, 1950 to 1959). The Bell numbers were assigned on June 28, 1966 during Dr. William L. Ackerman's tenure as Glenn Dale Superintendent (1959 to 1974). Neither Dr. Creech nor Dr. Ackerman, known especially for his work with camellias, could provide any insight.

There is no way to relate Dr. Parlman's specimen back to the original plant at Glenn Dale. In working documents from the period, Clones D ('Mrs. LBJ'), I, and J are described as white, which narrows the field slightly. The balance, however, are described as "pink" which means that 'Brookside Delight' is one of nine similar plants. It should be noted that all 'Brookside Delight' plants are derived from Dr. Parlman's plant in Bowie, Maryland.

Conversations with Sue Bentz at Glenn Dale and Kevin Tunison at the US National Arboretum failed to turn up any additional information. Fortunately, Don Voss, a colleague who volunteers at the US National Arboretum's herbarium, turned up two USNA accession cards for 'Mrs. LBJ'. The first card indicated that Cross #10 belonged to Albert Close (3). The second card reported that the cross was a "Belgian by a Glenn Dale."

In a recent e-mail from Dr. Creech, another piece of the puzzle fell into place. He reminded me that 'Seattle White' was listed in Galle as the seed parent for 'Mrs. LBJ', which meant that it was also the seed parent for 'Brookside Delight'. While I would prefer to know all of the specifics about 'Brookside Delight', it may be as Dr. Creech remarked, that the complete story "...may have to remain one of life's little mysteries."

Introduction and Availability

The formal introduction of 'Brookside Delight' will take place at the Landon Azalea Festival, May 3-5, 2002 in Bethesda, Maryland. I give special thanks to Jane Kinzie, of Kinzie Farms, Inc., a member of the Brookside Gardens Chapter, who graciously and unselfishly undertook the propagation of a supply of plants to meet the expected demand.

Notes

1. The Glenn Dale Preservation Project was an ASA national project started by Roger Brown, then the president of the Ben Morrison Chapter, and the late Frank White, a local nurseryman in Lanham, Maryland, and a key figure in the early years of the ASA.

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Society News

US National Arboretum Conference

ASA President Joe Schild has been invited to attend this conference March 27-28, 2002. There will be a number of workshops on the future of the arboretum and its educational and research missions.

Following the conference, the Northern Virginia Chapter is hosting Joe at their chapter meeting. Joe will inform them about what went on at the conference and its impact on the Society. He will also give a preview of the next year's ASA convention in Chattanooga and present a slide show of some of his own hybrids. Ben Morrison and Brookside Chapters are invited to attend as well.

2003 ASA Convention

The 2003 ASA Convention will be held in Chattanooga, Tennessee, May 1-4, 2003. The Clarion Hotel will be the hotel and convention site. Joe Schild has been hard at work collecting a committee of people in Chattanooga who really want the Society to enjoy their city and local gardens:

Joe Schild,
convention committee chairman

Co-chair, to be named soon

Committee members

Jimmy Wooten

Ron Hooper

Dr. Rudolph Hoppe

Burton Johnston

Betty Johnston

James Dennis

Judy Dennis

LaShon Schild

To increase attendance, the committee is planning a publicity blitz of electronic and print media promoting registration for all the evening sessions and plant sale. Public entrance fees are yet to be determined. The annual ban-

quet and business meeting will be members only, of course.

The Clarion Hotel is an excellent convention facility with easy access to major highways and interstates. Detailed registration information will be posted on the Society website, as it evolves, but the convention rate is already set at \$79.00 per night for single, double, triple, or quad occupancy, plus tax with \$6.00 daily secured parking rate.

Plants for the plant sale are reserved. The speakers list is in process, but one is well-known nurseryman Don Shadow of Shadow Nursery in Winchester, Tennessee. Tour choices will include a Southern Belle Riverboat Cruise and the Tennessee Aquarium, plus Reflection Riding Arboretum and Botanical Garden. Because of Joe's long association with the latter, docents will be able to provide history and data about the plant material on the 300-acre site. One tour destination will be the Tennessee State University Nursery Crops Research Station in McMinnville, with stops along the way to see the native azaleas of the Cumberland Plateau.

Brookside—continued

2. It should be noted that Clone D, B57680, a white, single, hose-in-hose flower, was named 'Mrs. LBJ' and introduced by Dr. John Creech in 1969 under PI337619. The original plant was removed from Creech's Row at Glenn Dale, and its whereabouts are unknown.

3. Albert Close was an English-trained gardener who served as chief propagator at the Glenn Dale Introduction Station from the mid-1930s until his retirement in the early 1960s.

William C. Miller III is a recipient of the Society's Distinguished Service Award and the Brookside Gardens Chapter's Frederic P. Lee Commendation. He is a past president of the Brookside Gardens Chapter, a former vice president of the Society, a past member of the ASA board of directors, past co-chairman of the ASA's membership committee and past chairman of the public information committee, a long-time ASA member, and a frequent contributor to The Azalean.



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