

Table 1.
German-English Equivalents

Color Terms—Hues

aprikosenfarben—apricot color
 cremefarbenweiss—creamy white
 gelb—yellow
 karminrot—carmine red
 lachsrosa—salmon pink
 lila—mauve, purple
 mauverosa—mauve pink
 orangeroth—orange red
 orange-zinnober—orange vermilion
 orange—orange
 orangegelb—orange yellow
 purpur—crimson
 purpurrosa—purplish pink
 rot—red
 rosarot—deep pink
 rosa—pink
 scharlachrot—scarlet
 schwefelgelb—sulfur yellow
 weiss—white
 ziegelrot—brick red
 zinnoberrot—vermilion
 zitronengelb—lemon yellow

Color Terms—Modifiers

blass—pale
 bunt—bright
 dunkel—dark
 feurig—fiery
 hell—light
 intensiv—intense, vivid
 kräftig—strong
 leuchtend—brilliant
 rein—pure
 schwach—weak
 verblassen [in der Sonne]—faded [in sunlight]

Plant Descriptions—Plant Parts

O overstruck /—symbol for diameter
 laub [belaubung]—leaf (foliage)
 in Austrieb—emerging
 im Herbst—in autumn
 blüten—flower
 blütenstand—inflorescence
 einzelblüte—individual flower, floret
 blütenblatt—petal
 oberen—upper
 unteren—lower
 blütenaussenseite—outside of corolla

blüteninnenseite—inside of corolla

blütensaum—edge of corolla
 gefranst—fringed
 gekrauselt—ruffled
 blütenabschnitt—flower segment, sector
 blütenrohre—corolla tube
 duften—emit fragrance
 fleck—spot, patch
 knospe—bud
 kugelig—ball-shaped
 schlund—throat of flower
 vollaufgeblüht—in full bloom, fully open

Plant Descriptions—Habit

aufrecht—upright, fastigiate
 breit—wide
 breit aufrecht—broadly upright
 buschig—bushy
 geschlossen—dense
 im alter—in age, at maturity
 rund, rundlich—round, rounded
 stark—strong
 Wuchs—growth

Mastering Azaleas

Part 1: Don't Plant That Azalea in That Hole

Joseph Schild, Jr. — Hixson, Tennessee

When my wife and I purchased our new home in November 1966, the landscape was a pitiful excuse of one columnar juniper at each end, three January Jasmine, three *Ilex crenata* 'Rotunda', and one holly of unknown background. To call our lawn turf would have been an insult to grass, for it was hit-or-miss 'Kentucky 31 Tall Fescue', something even a goat will not eat.

I wanted something with some color and shrubs I could be proud of so I began looking at a number of

homes in the area, and I noticed azaleas in bloom the spring of 1967. That was what I wanted, with all the bright colors and nice shrub habit.

After talking with several co-workers, one suggested Perry Nursery on Signal Mountain as a source of azaleas. My first visit to Scotty Perry's nursery was rewarding, and I later developed a gardening relationship with him. I purchased a number of one-gallon azaleas: two 'Hinodegiri', two 'Christmas Cheer', two 'Coral Bells', two 'Fashion', and two 'Snow'.

On my return home I purchased a bale of peat moss.

The story takes a sorry turn here, for the one thing I did not get from Scotty was the proper method of planting my new azaleas. I dug nice holes in the sticky, yellow clay, sat the azaleas in the holes, promptly back-filled with a mixture of peat moss and woodland soil, and then watered them in until the excess water ran out.

I did have enough gardening knowledge to understand that newly plant-

ed shrubs require good moisture the first year or two until they establish a good root system. Oh, I was very diligent and kept those azaleas well watered from spring into the hot summer months; but then, about the first of September, I noticed them looking poorly and developing dead limbs.

By mid-October, all but one azalea was dead as a doornail, and I was really confused and perturbed. The reason for my distress was as close as a telephone call to Scotty. After I described the situation to him, he told me about the right way to plant azaleas and apologized for not doing so at his nursery when I purchased the plants. Scotty told me that what most likely killed the plants was root rot, *Phytophthora syringae*, the result of too much water at the root zone.

Armed with a better understanding of azaleas and their cultural needs, I set to redoing the areas where new azaleas would be planted. I removed the dead plants, heaped them onto the brush pile for burning, and poured a mix of bleach and water into the old holes to kill off any remaining root rot disease.

Where each new azalea was to be planted, I removed all the clay soil and made the new hole about three times the size of the azalea's root ball. Since they would be on a slope, I dug a trench on the low side, poured in some pea gravel, and covered it with a section of poly and soil to the original level. The principle here is to drain away any excess water from the hole.

My next chore was to make a mixture of peat moss, sharp sand, and good woods soil. Keep in mind that in 1967 pine bark was not available in our area, was not recognized as an excellent soil amendment, and only later was discovered to prevent some root rots.

I made another trip to the Perry Nursery to pick up new azaleas and have a sit down with Scotty for more ammunition on growing azaleas. He did not give me the new plants, but I gained more from talking with him

about the plants and how to grow them than the cost. The best advice he gave me was to always plant azaleas higher than the surrounding soil, use a well drained mixture, keep the plants moist but not drenched, and mulch with pine needles.

A number of those original azaleas are still in my landscape in 2003, although I have moved on to better examples and more deciduous forms. Though the Kurume azalea 'Snow' looks like a scalded chicken after blooming, I keep one in my landscape to remind me of the early days.

In 35 years of making mistakes in my garden and learning from each one, I now have about 1500 thriving azaleas, rhododendrons, and mountain laurel. I did modify my growing techniques to raised beds and quit the "claymore" method. In addition, I concluded that compost and pine bark are the elixirs of azalea gardening.

To summarize the important points in this article:

- Do not plant that azalea in just any hole.
- Use a well-drained mixture of pine bark, compost, and good woods soil.
- Plant high and mulch.
- Keep the soil moist, not drenched.
- If good drainage is a problem with a heavy clay soil, consider raised bed growing.
- If you are one of the lucky people with deep sandy loam soil, incorporate more pine bark fines to help retain moisture.

If by this time you are unsure if your soil will drain well, feel free to use my method of checking. First, dig a hole where you plan to plant, then fill it with water. If the water has soaked into the ground completely within 30 minutes, you have very well-percolating soil. However, if you come back in an hour and there is still water in the hole, consider using raised bed methods (see the Summer 2003 issue of *The Azalean*). If you come back the next day and water is running from the hole, move out of the swamp or switch to aquatic plants.

There are many reasons to use mulches around our azaleas, but avoid using hardwood mulches, for they will eventually raise the pH. Pine bark, pine needles, and shredded oak leaves make wonderful mulches, because of their acid-forming nature and their capacity to keep the root zone cool, help retain moisture, and create a microclimate around the shrub. Two to three inches of mulch is best. It should be kept at least an inch or so away from the azalea stems, to avoid bark damage from the increased moisture in the mulch and to prevent inviting moles and mice to nibble the bark.

From a simple economic standpoint, planting azaleas in our home landscapes the right way will add value to our homes. If we treat azaleas as living partners and not as annuals, they should out-live us and become something of a legacy attesting to our gardening skills.

Contribution from New York

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After an e-mail exchange with Bud Gehrlich (rhodobud@optonline.net), the Society has received a gift from the ARS. It seems appropriate to note it in *The Azalean*.

On November 17, 2002, Bill Steele, a long-time ASA member, gave a program to the New York Chapter of the American Rhododendron Society as part of their monthly meeting at Planting Fields Arboretum. The program, "The Old and the New-The Best of the Best" was a slide show and talk featuring azaleas and some lepidote rhododendrons.

As thanks for the program, the New York Chapter of the ARS has donated \$100 to the ASA, earmarked for the Research Fund. Until the ASA has a Research Fund, the money will be held in our Endowment Reserve fund. This is an excellent example of inter-society cooperation.