

Horticulture. David received his BS degree in Biology. They were co-owners of Holly Hills Nursery, located in Evansville, Indiana, started by their late father Dr. H.R. Schroeder, Jr., MD.



This photo shows the open shrub habit of 'Doctor Henry Schroeder', taken in the private garden of the late Fred Sievers. (Photo by Greg Wedding)



Not only are Schroeder hybrids cold-tolerant, but they also display a variety of flower forms. Shown here are three very attractive variations: Photo 1. 'Mrs. Mildred Kinder', a double lavender with pointed petals; Photo 2. 'Margaret Hyatt', a lovely pink double with frilly edges; and Photo 3. 'Schroeder's Pink Perfection', a double with rose strap-like petals. (All photos by Jackie Cottom)



Azalea Gardens Hillwood Museum and Gardens

Kelly Wilson — McLean, Virginia

Each May, the soft pastels, friendly corals, and vivid reds of layers of azaleas remind us why they are one of the biggest attractions at Hillwood Museum and Gardens. To large numbers of Hillwood's visitors, May is the best and most favored time to see the thousands of colorful azaleas and take in the rest of the gardens.

This past spring was no exception. An early warm spell followed by cooler-than-average temperatures gave way to four weeks of spectacular blooms. Korean rhododendrons kicked off the season, followed by Glenn Dale, Kurume, Girard, and Satsuki hybrids. Towering old elm trees, flowering dogwoods, and illustrious camellias created a perfect backdrop for the mature 1950s and 1960s azalea cultivars.

Brian Barr, Hillwood's deputy director for horticulture, describes the estate's azaleas as "tried and true." Many of the azaleas are "still in the nursery trade, with probably a few that have been lost." He notes that 'Koromo-shikibu,' one of many azaleas repeated in Hillwood's 14 acres of cultivated landscape, recently took Best in Show at the local Brookside Gardens Chapter of the Azalea Society.

Hillwood, the former home of Post cereal heiress Marjorie Merriweather Post, was purchased with the philanthropist's intent to showcase her French and Russian decorative and fine arts collections. Located adjacent to Rock Creek Park in northwest Washington, DC, Hillwood houses the largest collection of Russian decorative arts outside of Russia. Imperial Russian portraits, including of Catherine the Great and Nicholas II, flank the grand staircase of the estate's 36-room mansion. French furnishings and tapestries dominate the French Drawing Room, and Fabergé Easter eggs occupy center stage in the Icon Room.

While appreciating 18th century French furniture, Mrs. Post also delighted in her landscape and was especially fond of the azaleas. She took such pride in the azaleas that she scheduled her spring garden parties around their peak bloom period, which usually falls around Mother's Day. Earl Loy, a full-time gardener for Mrs. Post, explained in an interview that she would call from her Palm Beach estate in December to inquire about the peak date so she could plan her parties accordingly.

Following Mrs. Post's death in 1973, the gardens experienced a slow decline. Long-time Hillwood horticulture staff member Bill Johnson recalls how huge and overgrown the azaleas became: "Lack of sunlight created a terrible case of



Glenn Dale and Kurume hybrids at their peak in the Hillwood Gardens. Every year Mrs. Post would hold an annual garden party centered around the azaleas' bloom date, usually the beginning of May. (Photo courtesy of Hillwood Museum and Gardens)

Margie Jenkins Honored with SNA Award

Robert (Buddy) Lee —
Independence, Louisiana

Congratulations to our own Margie Jenkins, of Amite, Louisiana, for receiving the Slayer Wight Memorial Award from the Southern Nurserymen Association (SNA) on August 12, 2005, in Atlanta, Georgia. This award dates back to 1956, and is presented annually to the person who has contributed most to the advancement of the nursery industry in the South. In the award's 50-year history, Margie Jenkins is the first lady to ever receive the award.

Margie has served on the national board of directors for the ASA and presently holds the position of treasurer of the Louisiana Chapter. She is very knowledgeable in the nursery industry and is considered an expert on evergreen azaleas. Again, congratulations, Margie. (Photo by Buddy Lee)



petal blight, and you couldn't even see over the azaleas they were so tall." All that changed in 1993 with a renewed emphasis on the gardens and the hiring of the first director of horticulture. The first major project? Thinning out the azaleas. In 1997 the museum closed for renovations, and a major restoration began of the gardens. The thinning of the azaleas continued to be evaluated and resulted in additional "weeding out." Horticulture staff reviewed photographs, home movies, and oral histories to determine cultivars appropriate to the time during which Mrs. Post resided at Hillwood.

In today's care of these stately gems of the garden, pine-bark fines have replaced shredded mulch, which had only served to raise the pH of the soil and turn the azaleas chlorotic. This past spring, the staff filled gaps in the garden with additional rhododendrons, azaleas, and dogwoods. With the move into summer, *Pulmonaria* and ostrich ferns found their way into little niches in the garden.

Visitors who want to experience the peak azalea bloom are advised to plan well in advance. Reservations are now being accepted for May 2006. Hillwood is open Tuesday through Saturday, 10:00 am to 5:00 pm and select Sundays throughout the year. It is closed the month of January and on most Federal holidays. Admission is \$12 for adults, \$10 for seniors, \$7 for students, and \$5 for children ages 6 to 18. Reservations are required and can be made by calling 1-877-HILLWOOD or visiting www.hillwoodmuseum.org.

Kelly Wilson has been the cutting-garden manager at Hillwood for five years. She has a horticulture degree from Virginia Tech. She is learning to like azaleas because of her work at Hillwood. She is a budding photographer and writer.

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