

selected columns of the data into a hand-held PDA, to keep all the garden data in my pocket in a very useful form. The data I keep on my Sony Clie PEG-SJ20 PDA are:

- Bed name
- Plant name
- Plant number
- Bed location
- Bloom time
- Color
- Plant size
- Notes

I upload this from my computer and import it as standard (i.e., no programming required) "memos" on the Sony PDA, which is about the same as "notes" on a Palm PDA. I separate the data elements with commas to help with the upload/download. That is one of the standard ways to export data from a spreadsheet—it's called CSV format, for "comma separated values." After importing the data to the PDA, it appears as a scrollable list of all the plants, sorted by bed name and by plant name within each bed. There isn't much display space, so each entry in the list only shows the bed name, usually most or all of the plant name, and none, part or all of the number depending on how long the plant name is. Tapping an entry then shows all the information for that plant and lets you edit it. The PDA built-in "find" function searches on any text in any field and lists all the matches very quickly.

Having the name and location data lets me find any plant in the garden without relying on my memory: I just search on the name or number and tap on the appropriate result to see all the information for that plant, including its bed name and location (see Figure 2). Knowing that if I take big steps I have a 3' stride, and knowing where the bed stakes are, makes short work of finding that plant. That same search by name augments my memory at a plant sale and avoids my buying duplicate plants by mistake.

Having the plant location lets me make a new label for a plant with a missing label. I use Oats AlumaBoss labels, which are soft aluminum you emboss by writing on it with a pencil or ballpoint pen. I put the



Figure 2 (above). Example "garden in your pocket"—a list of plants, in this case, in the "above the glen" bed. (Photo by Bob Stelloh)

I put the name on one side, and the number on the other side, with space left over for bloom color, bloom time, etc. I buy the labels without wires, and instead use 9" lengths of scrap insulated telephone wire, the finer the wire the better. A nice touch I was taught by Malcolm Clark is to always put the label on the north side. North isn't important, but having one standard location (rather than the most convenient—and different—location for each plant) is very important in reducing the time spent finding a label. I put a loose wire loop around two branches at a three- or four-branch fork near the end of a stem about waist high, and gently crimp the loop closed to help keep it where I put it. I think using fine wire will let it open

Figure 3 (below). Full details for the 'Macrantha Purple' entry shown in Figure 2. (Photo by Bob Stelloh)



up as the branches grow to avoid any girdling. Another idea I've learned but have not done, is to make a duplicate label with a much longer wire, put the wire on the ground around the plant, mulch over it, and forget about it. When the visible label on the plant is gone, you can feel around in the mulch to find the wire and thus the label, and duplicate its information onto another visible label.

Having the location, bloom time, color, and size data lets me enter or change that data in the PDA when I'm in the garden looking at the plant, and then download it to the computer later. It might be easier to jot down some notes on a piece of paper, and use those notes to update your spreadsheet. Just remember—keeping track of your plants isn't nearly as important as caring for their needs.

Bob Stelloh, our treasurer, is an avid azalea enthusiast and former software engineer. He is currently very involved with the azaleas e-mail list and the ASA Web site, and with finding and documenting native stands of Rhododendron vaseyi. He is also thinking about rewriting gim jr to run on a PC as well as a Macintosh, using the fine new PC awarded to him at the 2005 ASA convention as the test bed.

New Members

The following new members have joined the Society as of October 14, 2005

At-Large

Phyllis & Gerald Schofield
P. O. Box 1936
Mt. Pleasant, TX 75456
903-572-4817

Vaseyi Chapter

Duane Clayburn
87 Morgan View Drive
Fletcher, NC 28732-9774
828-891-6369
dbcla307@bellsouth.net

Lake Michigan Chapter

Rosemary Lernowich
239 E Main Street
Rockford, MI 49341-1051
616-863-6994
rlernowich@creativeop.com

David Groff
101 Glossop Circle
Columbia, SC 29212
803-781-5431
kawika051@aol.com

Tri-State Chapter

Great View Nursery
Dow Whiting
116 Great View Road
Highlandville, MO 65669
dowwus@yahoo.com