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The

Azalean

Journal of the Azalea Society of America

**A Capital Adventure —
Joint ASA/ARS Convention 2006**

Hybrid Native Azaleas on "Pace Bald"

**A Letter to Corinne Murrah about
the Glenn Dale Hybrids**

The Native Azaleas on Gregory Bald

**Tyler Junior College's Brundrett
Azalea Garden Grows Up**



1000 Moody Bridge Road
Cleveland, SC 29635

President's Letter

Robert (Buddy) Lee — Independence, Louisiana

What a year it has been! Record hurricanes, earthquakes, tornadoes, and wildfires in the Western United States will surely be remembered for a long time. Terrorism, conflicts in the Middle East, and skyrocketing gas prices have only added to our anxiety. If you have not been personally touched by any of the events, I'm sure that you probably were overwhelmed by the media coverage of them. My hopes and prayers are that everyone who was seriously affected by these catastrophic events is doing well, recovering, and looking for a brighter tomorrow. Let's not let all these terrible things diminish all the great and wonderful events that have happened this past year. One memorable event that I remember is the national convention and meeting in Michigan this past May. What a great time everyone had at this convention. I'm sure there were many activities that local chapters have been involved in this past year that have been exciting and memorable as well. The chapters are where the "tire meets the road," and I encourage members to get involved and get excited about your chapter activities.

The 2006 national convention and membership meeting will be held in Rockville, Maryland, (Washington DC area) on May 12-15. This will be a joint meeting of the ASA and American Rhododendron Society. The garden tours, convention speakers, and all the many other details have been finalized, and the convention is all set to go. The convention overview, schedule, and registration are printed in this winter issue of *The Azalean*. From the information that I have reviewed and from the conversations I have had with the planning coordinators, I am totally convinced that we can expect nothing less than an absolutely wonderful experience at this convention. Register early so that you will not miss out on any of these wonderful scheduled programs and tours. These conventions are like a family reunion, so

come on over and be a part of our extended azalea family.

Our Society is going through some exciting times. Our Web site and on-line discussion is generating a lot of interest; our journal, *The Azalean*, is receiving great comments and praise; our archive project is proceeding in a timely manner; and the Azalea City of America project is gaining momentum. All of these projects and many others not mentioned have been set in motion to make our Society stronger and continue to provide services for our members and to create interest for potential members. These projects do not just happen on their own, but many hours of hard work go into the planning, implementation, and maintenance of them. It may be hard work, but it is very exciting and rewarding. Our Society has many areas where a member can volunteer and become involved. The *membership is the Society*, so let the board of directors know about your interest and concerns. And again, get involved; that's where it's at.

The brochure committee, Carol Segree, Bob Hobbs, and Bill McDavit, are nearing completion of our new ASA brochure. There has been a lot of intense work, discussion, and exchange of ideas in the evolution of this brochure. I'm looking forward to getting the finished product printed and distributed to our chapters. Our Society needs this new brochure as part of our overall strategy of getting information out about our Society and, we hope, recruiting new members. Thank you Carol, Bob, and Bill for all your time and effort on this project.

Hope that you have a wonderful 2006 and that you see many beautiful blooming azaleas along the way.

Best regards,
Robert (Buddy) Lee

Azalea Society of America

The Azalea Society of America, organized December 9, 1977 and incorporated in the District of Columbia, is an educational and scientific non-profit association devoted to the culture, propagation and appreciation of azaleas Subgenera *Tsutsusi* and *Pentanthera* of the genus *Rhododendron* in the Heath family (*Ericaceae*).

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The Azalean

Journal of the Azalea Society
of America

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On the Cover

According to Galle, *Rhododendron* 'Leprechaun' resulted from the cross of two seedlings, of Kaempferi, Kurume, and Southern Indian hybrids. The Kurume heritage is obvious from the way the clusters of two to seven light purple (RHS 77C) 1-1/2" flowers densely cover the plant. This is an example of a Beltsville Dwarf, one of 19 selected by Robert L. Pryor from the Yerkes-Pryor hybrids. They are very low-growing and have a compact spreading habit, blooming early, typically staying less than 30" in height and about 24" in width (Galle, *Azaleas*, rev. and enlarged ed., p. 186). Convention participants will see 40-year old Beltsville dwarf specimens in the garden of Norman and Jean Beaudry May 14, 2006, while on Tour C during the joint ASA-ARS convention. (See article p. 76; photo by Don Hyatt.)



A Capital Adventure — Joint ASA/ARS Convention

May 12–15, 2006

Join us in May of 2006 for a “Capital Adventure.” Hosted in Rockville, Maryland, a nearby suburb of Washington, DC, this will be the joint annual meeting for both the Azalea Society of America and the American Rhododendron Society. Help us reflect on our past achievements and look forward to exciting new directions and opportunities for the future.



Photo 1. Azalea Trail at Brookside Gardens.
(Photo by William C. Miller III.)

Please note a slight shift in sequence for traditional staging of this convention. We will open the program on Friday evening, May 12, and close Monday morning, May 15, 2006. By spanning the weekend, we were able to secure significant savings on room costs while avoiding rush-hour traffic complexities in our Nation’s Capital.

Hotel and Conference Facility

Our convention will be headquartered at the DoubleTree-Rockville Hotel, a first-rate facility with direct access to the Red Line of the Washington Metro Subway. The hotel is conveniently located in the northwest suburbs of Washington, DC, with easy access from the Capital Beltway (I-495) and Interstate I-270. There is complimentary underground parking for hotel guests.

Three major airports serve the greater Washington area including BWI in Baltimore, Maryland; Reagan National in Alexandria, Virginia; and Dulles International in Chantilly, Virginia. Shuttle and taxi service is available, and airports provide connections to the Metro. Both the MARC train and Amtrak serve Rockville.

Garden Tours

The primary garden tours are scheduled for Saturday and Sunday. On Saturday, we offer a choice of two tours, and on Sunday there is only one option. We have also planned an overnight trip into the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia after the convention.

Attendees or family members may also decide to extend their stay on either side of the convention to see some of the historic sights in Washington, DC. Most of the monuments and points of interest are easily reached from the Metro.

Saturday Tour A – Private Gardens / Brookside Gardens

Most of the gardens on this tour are nearby, so little time is wasted in transit. A major attraction will be **Brookside Gardens**, a 54-acre worldclass public garden developed and operated by the Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission. The landscape includes both formal and informal areas with intimate garden rooms defined by walls, hedges, shrubs, and trees (Photo 1). Major features include multiple formal gardens, a 5-acre azalea garden, an aquatic garden, the Japanese Teahouse, two conservatories, and a new visitors’ center.

There are five private gardens on this tour, most of which are gardens of our ASA hosts in the Brookside Gardens Chapter. The 1-acre garden of **Barry and Nancy Bosworth**, with its winding paths, small waterfall, and fishpond, has approximately 75 azaleas interspersed with various perennials and wildflowers. The second garden, the wooded landscape of **Dianne and James Gregg**, showcases azalea plantings that bloom over a long period of time and represents many hybrid families as well as native deciduous azaleas. **Jane and Bob Kinzie’s** garden is a 1-1/2-acre property resembling a park, with a pond as the centerpiece and hundreds of azaleas and specimen



Photo 2. Garden path in the Kinzie garden.
(Photo by Jane Kinzie.)

plantings along the winding gravel paths under a canopy of mature trees and shrubs (Photo 2). Surrounding the home of **Janet and Bill Miller's** shaded 1/2-acre property are hundreds of mature evergreen and deciduous azaleas representing most of the major hybrid groups, both old and new (Photo 3). Bill is co-chair of the 2006 Convention. **Glenn and Nancy Thompson's** 1-1/2-acre diverse landscape has paths leading to individual gardens filled with azaleas and many other plants, all protected by an 8' iron fence to keep out the deer.



Photo 3. *Rhododendron austrinum* 'Millie Mac' in the Miller garden. (Photo by William C. Miller III.)

Saturday Tour B – Baltimore Gardens / U.S. National Arboretum

The alternative Saturday tour will return to two popular sites visited during the 2004 ASA convention. We will first travel north to Baltimore to once again see 100-acre **Marshy Point Nursery**, the home of **Harry Weiskittel** and the wholesale nursery specializing in rhododendrons and azaleas that he and his son, **Austin**, operate. Surrounding Harry's home is a large rhododendron and azalea display garden showcasing rare trees,



Photo 5. Purple and white azalea hybrid at Marshy Point, Henry Weiskittel's nursery. (Photo by Don Hyatt.)

new azalea and rhododendron hybrids, and many Marshy Point introductions that Harry has hybridized (for example, see Photo 4). We have allowed additional time this year so people have a chance to see more of the production facilities, or just admire the lovely setting of Marshy Point, which boasts nearly a mile of scenic shoreline on the northern Chesapeake Bay. A second private garden in the Baltimore area, which was not on the 2004 tour, is **Dr. Jerry Hudgen's "Fern Dell,"** a beautiful 4-1/2-acre woodland landscape that borders a rushing stream. In addition to evergreen and native azaleas, Jerry's garden hosts an extensive and well-labeled collection of rare native plants, ferns, wildflowers, and many other horticultural treasures.

After lunch, guests will return to Washington, DC, to spend the rest of the afternoon at the 446-acre **US National Arboretum**. The Arboretum is well known for the large azalea display on Mount Hamilton where Benjamin Yoe Morrison, the

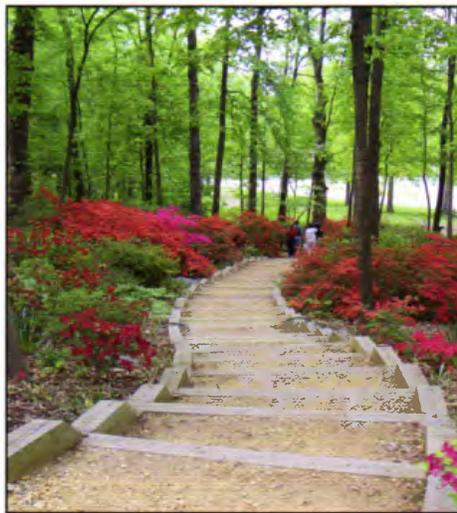


Photo 4. Azalea Trail at US National Arboretum. (Photo by Don Hyatt.)

Arboretum's first director, planted many of the Glenn Dale azaleas that he hybridized. The azalea collection has been rejuvenated and expanded by **Barbara Bullock**, the current azalea curator, who will be around to greet guests (Photo 5).

The Arboretum has many other attractions including the newly reno-

ated National Bonsai and Penjing Museum that houses one of the largest collections of miniature trees in North America, the Gotelli dwarf conifer collection, the Asian Valley, Fern Valley, and the National Herb Garden.



Photo 6. McCrillis gardens. (Photo by William C. Miller III.)

Sunday Tour C – Private Gardens / McCrillis Gardens

On Sunday, we offer only one tour that will visit three larger private gardens in excess of 2 acres, as well as the 5-acre **McCrillis Gardens**. McCrillis was a private home in an upscale neighborhood that was donated by its former owners to the park commission so the landscape could become a permanent public garden. This premier shade garden features masses of mature azaleas, striking specimen trees, and choice companion plants surrounding the original stone house (Photo 6).



Photo 7. Reiley garden. (Photo by Don Hyatt.)

The private 5-acre rhododendron garden of **Ed and Mary Reiley** is both a lovely landscape and a test garden with a mature rhododendron collection representing over 775 different cultivars and species, some of which are 20 to 40 years old. In addition to many of Ed's own hybrids that are under evaluation, the garden includes evergreen and deciduous azaleas and many companion plants (Photo 7). Ed is a

noted author on horticultural topics, past president of the American Rhododendron Society, and recipient of the ARS Gold Medal.

Of interest to many of the old guard in the Azalea Society of America will be a nostalgic return to the former home of the late George Harding, one of the founders of the ASA (Photo 8). Many of George's original plantings still remain on the property, the site where **Mike and Deb White** now operate a retail azalea nursery. Mike is George Harding's grandson and continues to carry on the tradition of enriching local gardens with wonderful new azalea varieties.



Photo 8. The late George Harding. (Slide supplied by Debbie White.)

The third garden is that of **Norman and Jean Beaudry**, a lovely 2-1/2-acre sloping woodland landscape featuring more than 500 rhododendrons and azaleas including many Gable and Dexter hybrids. Along winding paths in the Beaudry's garden are a number of mature Beltsville Dwarf azaleas that are over 40 years old. The garden has many companion plants including collections of Japanese maples, magnolias, dwarf and larger conifers, wildflowers, and unusual trees (Photo 9).

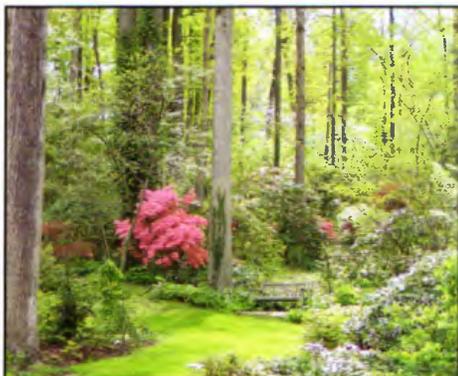


Photo 9. Garden vista at the Beaudry garden. (Photo by Don Hyatt.)

Post-convention Tour D – Blue Ridge Mountains

After the convention, we have planned an overnight trip into the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia. This tour will leave early Monday morning, May 15, and return to the hotel by Tuesday evening, May 16, 2006. *People who have difficulty walking should be warned that some of the stops have uneven terrain and may require short hikes to fully appreciate the scenery.*

The first stop will be “**Phran's Azalea Trails**,” the 5-acre azalea garden of **Frances and Phil Louer** in Haymarket, Virginia. With over 8,000 azaleas representing 2,790 varieties and 271 hybrid groups, the Louers have one of the largest azalea collections in the region. Their landscape has approximately 200 small flowerbeds situated along winding trails in their level, wooded garden, and they have arranged their azaleas to blend in both color and size (Photo 10).



Photo 10. Frances Louer in her garden. (Photo by Don Hyatt.)

We will then head south to Charlottesville for lunch at historic **Michie Tavern**. The Tavern's traditional menu includes fried chicken, cornbread, biscuits, and a host of colonial favorites, all served in period settings. After lunch, guests will stop at **Monticello**, the home of **President Thomas Jefferson**, to tour both the house and gardens. In the afternoon, the buses will drive south on the Blue

Ridge Parkway so people can admire the scenic views. As time permits, we will make occasional stops to see native azaleas, rhododendrons, and other wildflowers up close (Photo 11).



Photo 11. *R. prinophyllum* on the Blue Ridge Parkway. (Photo by Don Hyatt.)

The night's lodging will be at the **Peaks of Otter Lodge**, a facility well known for its peaceful setting overlooking a lake at the base of the mountain peaks. Dinner will be on your own that night at the excellent and very reasonable Peaks of Otter Restaurant. One warning, though; the lodge is very remote and does not have television or phone service in the rooms. Instead of relying on high-end technologies, enjoy a peaceful walk around the lake, gather in the lodge to talk with friends, or just listen to the birds.

The next morning, the restaurant will serve guests a hearty breakfast buffet before the buses continue south to **Roanoke** for the next stop, the garden of **Paul and Barbara James**. This exquisite mountain garden covers approximately 15 acres, but is just part of approximately 1,000 acres of land extending to the mountain peaks in the distance that has been in Paul's family for over 200 years. Paul has the largest collection of the Delp rhododendrons, as well as hybrids from Russell and Velma Haag, George Ring, and many others. He has a spectacular rock garden flanked by large specimens of the native *Rhododendron calendulaceum*, as well as superb collections of other azaleas, maples, dwarf conifers, hostas, wildflowers, and

conifers, hostas, wildflowers, and almost every other plant imaginable.

After lunch, we will begin our return trip to Rockville, traveling north through the scenic Shenandoah Valley. Buses should be back at the hotel by 6:00 p.m. Tuesday evening, so guests may either extend their stay at the DoubleTree Hotel or head for home.

Due to the number of rooms at the Peaks of Otter Lodge, space on this tour is limited, so please register early. We also request that singles try to find roommates so that we can maximize attendance. Remember, registration deadline is April 5, 2006.

Speakers

We have invited a number of distinguished speakers who will address a wide range of topics including horticulture trends, plant exploration, new introductions, and disease control. We will feature Mr. Stanton Gill and Dr. Harold Sweetman on Friday night, Dr. Hartwig Schepker on Saturday night, and Mr. Jim Gardiner on Sunday.

Stanton Gill is a regional specialist with the Central Maryland Research and Education Center. He is a tenured professor with the University of Maryland and professor of Landscape Technology with Montgomery College. In his talk, he will discuss two exotic pests that pose a severe potential for destruction of our forests: the tiny green colored beetle called the emerald ash borer and the black and white beetle called the Asian long-horned beetle. Mr. Gill will also present a low-risk pesticide approach for integrated pest management with azaleas.

Dr. Harold Sweetman, executive director of the Jenkins Arboretum for the past 20 years, has traveled extensively in the pursuit of expanding the arboretum plant collections. He has a PhD in biology from Boston University and chairs the research committee of the ARS. His presenta-

tion will discuss wild rhododendron species that have been transformed into tamed hybrids that are now well suited for our gardens. As Dr. Sweetman discusses hybridizing potential in the genus *Rhododendron*, he will relate experiences on several explorations that he has taken into the wild including Yunnan (China), Arunachal Pradesh (India), and the Appalachians.

Dr. Hartwig Schepker is the scientific director of the Rhododendron-park Company in Bremen, Germany. This 46-hectare park (114 acres) hosts an extensive collection of rhododendron species and hybrids. It includes the municipal Botanical Garden and Germany's first Green Science Center, *botanika*, a facility that attempts to visualize the topic 'biodiversity' by using the genus *Rhododendron* as its main example. A horticulturist with a PhD in plant ecology, Dr. Schepker has a keen interest in the natural communities of rhododendrons and their companion plants. He will share with us his thoughts on rhododendron diversity including personal observations from the wild in remote places like Mt. Kinabalu in Borneo, natural stands in mainland and Southeast Asia including Nepal and Yunnan, and the Great Smoky Mountains.

Jim Gardiner is curator of the Royal Horticultural Society Garden at Wisley, England, a post he has held for nearly 17 years. Prior to that, he trained at the Savill and Valley Gardens, Windsor; the University of Cambridge Botanic Garden; the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh; and the City of Liverpool Botanic Garden. He also served as curator of The Hillier Gardens and Arboretum. A sought-after speaker and prolific writer on all things horticulture, he is particularly noted for his expertise with magnolias. He will profile four gardens of the RHS, Wisley, in particular, as he discusses the breadth of plant collections concentrating on rhododendrons and azaleas in the garden, the rhododendron trials, and the challenges of growing and promoting the genus.

Informal "Yakety Yaks"

In addition to our formal speakers, we have scheduled time for some shorter, late night mini-sessions and open discussions on topics of interest. One session will focus on native azaleas, beginning with a presentation of an aerial photograph taken of Gregory Bald in peak bloom (see description on p. 88). As people register for the convention, they may order a copy of that photograph and

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Hybrid Native Azaleas on “Pace Bald”

Doley S. Bell, Jr. and Leon Pace — Hendersonville, North Carolina

Over the last several years the Vaseyi Chapter of our society has had a number of programs by Ed Collins and others concerning native azalea hybrids on Copper and Gregory Balds. The color ranges of these special azaleas always bring “Oohs” and “Wows” from the audience, so the authors were inspired to make a trip. With both of us having been to Copper, we knew the hike and decided that Gregory was too strenuous.

2004 Trip

We figured mid- to late June should be good timing, so on June 20, 2004, we made the 100-mile drive from Hendersonville, North Carolina, and started hiking from Burning Town Gap shortly after 9:00 am. Expectation rose during the hike when we saw *Rhododendron calendulaceum* and *R. arborescens* as we headed towards Copper. By 11:00 am, we began our search of Copper by using the paths of previous visitors. Copper has too much shade, so we knew not to expect the full blooms that are found on



Seen on Copper Bald June 14, 2005.

Gregory. After spending an hour, we saw very few hybrids and wondered if we were too late or too early. Why were we finding such a low bud set? We decided that too much shade was probably the best explanation. It was high noon, a beautiful day, but very few Copper hybrids—what a disappointment! Conventional wisdom told us that past the right turn of the trail at upper Copper there are no hybrids. However, one year we had seen some nice flame azaleas (*R. calendulaceum*) about a half-mile past Copper at the rock outcropping viewpoint. So we agreed to spend a little more time and see them this year. Low bud-set again!

There we were, past Copper and still seeing few blooms. Since the trail was level, we continued walking. About 300 yards past the viewpoint, we arrived at a spot

that was not too steep. There we found a flame and a sweet azalea (*R. arborescens*, also known as the smooth azalea) in bloom. Entering the woods, we soon found a double Cumberland azalea (*R. calendulaceum*, formerly *R. bakeri*) and a single—both red, red. These were the best blooms of the day!

At this point time was getting short, so we started the return trip to the gap and Hendersonville. Discussing the trip, we began to think about the area where we found the *R. cumberlandense*. We had seen no tags, no paths, and yes, no hybrids; but, three species in bloom led us to think that there should be hybrids. We decided to search during the bloom of 2005.

2005 Trip

During the winter months we frequently thought about our approach to searching for hybrids. To facilitate our conversations, we named the area “Pace Bald” in honor of Leon’s thin hair! In true forestry terms the area is not a bald, but Copper is also not as much a bald as is Gregory. Our winter plans demanded secrecy since we had no desire of looking foolish before finding hybrids! With the encouragement of our wives, we decided to go to the Pace Bald every week beginning June 7, 2005, so as not to miss any blooms.

Our expectations were fairly low on June 7, when we made our first trip. Passing through Copper we did see some of the pink *R. arborescens* hybrids, but the bloom was sparse. Going the extra three-



Seen on Pace Bald July 6, 2005.

quarters of a mile to Pace, we were pleased to find our first hybrid: a *R. arborescens* with a yellow flare (blotch). We found several other typical flames and *R. arborescens*, which only increased our anticipation for future trips.

For our June 15 trip, a dear friend, Allen Clague, joined us so that he could see Copper for the first time. Driving up, we discussed with Allen the potential of Pace Bald.

Rather than requiring a blindfold, we accepted his declaration of secrecy. That day Copper had a very sparse bloom and was a disappointment to all of us! Continuing to Pace, we found a wonderful yellow flame and hybrid *R. arborescens*, but the double *R. cumberlandense* of 2004 was a single this year. However, Allen soon found a double *R. cumberlandense* that was as red as red can be. He declared Pace Bald far superior to Copper.

For our next trip on June 22, noted native azalea expert Ray Head joined us. After some explanation that our real destination was beyond Copper, we swore Ray to secrecy and he agreed to help us explore the area. We discovered more *R. arborescens* hybrids, another *R. cumberlandense* and other hybrids with good color and flares. We also saw tinted pink *R. arborescens* of different shadings and some nice oranges and reds with flares. (Copper continued its weak blooming year.) During the trip home, we asked Ray about his thoughts of Pace Bald. In his usual laid-back fashion, he said, "You boys have found some very nice plants."

We looked forward to June 29, our fourth trip, because Ray was joining us again, and we expected the *cumberlandense*-type hybrids to be great. (Unfortunately Ray's transmission went out, so he went home riding a wrecker while we continued the search.) My favorite *R. arborescens*, a glowing pink with prominent yellow flare was the find of the day! Hybrids of *R. cumberlandense*

hybrids and other *R. arborescens* made this day another special one.

During the bloom season we made two additional trips: July 6 and July 20. We made more finds on each trip. Ray, who also went along on July 29, even put a label on one flame hybrid, so you know it was a good late bloomer.

On each of the six trips, we had found hybrids, and we had seen hundreds of azaleas that did not bloom. We had expanded the search area each trip, but have only covered an area maybe 400 yards long and 50 yards wide. The area is thick, but to this point, we have not seen any snakes.

Why are we now sharing our experience with Pace Bald as well as the location? We did consider keeping it a secret another year, but we decided that the beauty of God's hybrids should be shared. Is Pace Bald better than Copper? For 2005 absolutely! Do we plan additional trips looking for hybrids—yes, several, and we hope to see many of you on the mountain!

Doley Bell and Leon Pace are charter members of the Vaseyi Chapter of the ASA and both are members of the ARS. Both are avid gardeners with numerous azaleas and rhododendrons. Hiking to see native azaleas has become a passion.

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accompanying CD with digital images of the azaleas on Gregory Bald. A second session will focus on hybridizing, leading off with some of the plants developed by local hybridizers in our region. Join us for the discussion, bring some pictures of your own to share, and make some new friends.

Plants

The hosting chapters have been actively propagating many of the convention plants for the sale. We are anxious to showcase rare azaleas and rhododendrons from our region including hard-to-find clones, seedlings and selections from the wild, and new introductions from local hybridizers.

We will offer many new azaleas and rhododendrons developed by our local hybridizers including **Dr. Sandra McDonald, Pete Vines, Buck Clagett, Joe Klimavicz, Jane Goodrich, George Ring, the late Augie Kehr, Bob Stewart, Walter Przypek,** and others. We will have some rare clones from the late **Joe Gable, the late Weldon Delp,** and **Russell and Velma Haag,** too. As banquet favors we are raising native azalea and rhododendron seedlings from rare forms observed in the wild.

Since people may not be familiar with varieties in our sale, we are preparing a CD with color images of the plants in bloom that will be available prior to the convention.

Banquets

We have arranged sumptuous banquets with keynote speakers for both Saturday and Sunday evenings. Saturday's will be less formal, a buffet featuring two favorites, roast beef *au jus* and grilled salmon with lemon caper sauce. Naturally, the chef will prepare a wide array of elegant side dishes.

The Sunday dinner will be a more formal banquet featuring a choice of entrees: red snapper served with coconut infused Thai rice, or roasted pork tenderloin and lavender wine reduction served with sweet potato stack *au gratin*. Be sure to save room for dessert, hazelnut torte with Grand Marnier sauce.

Closing Thoughts

Please join us this spring for an exciting joint convention designed to bring our two organizations closer together. We want to encourage younger families in our societies to visit Washington, DC, so we are waiving the basic registration fee for children under 12 when accompanied by parent or guardian. For additional information to help plan your trip, as well as expanded descriptions of the gardens on tour, including many pictures, please check our convention Web site: www.arspvc.org/2006.

A Letter to Corinne Murrah about the Glenn Dale Hybrids

William C. Miller III — Bethesda, Maryland

When Ben Morrison retired in the early 1950s from his job as the director of the US National Arboretum, his move to Pass Christian, Mississippi, was the end point to a planned transition that had been under way for a number of years. In the words of the local Chamber of Commerce, "The Pass" is a small and quiet "health and pleasure" resort town located on the Mississippi Gulf Coast 59 miles east of New Orleans and 60 miles west of Mobile. "Back Acres," the very modest home of Ivan Anderson, after which the azalea hybrid group is named, is located just to the north outside of The Pass city limits in a predominately rural setting. It provided Ben Morrison with the privacy and facilities to pursue his interest in azaleas until his death in 1966.

Morrison is well known for his efforts in the development of the US National Arboretum, the development of the Glenn Dale and Back Acres hybrid azaleas, and his tireless support of the American Horticultural Society, but his considerable legacy also includes many letters that he wrote to friends, colleagues, and acquaintances. An excellent example is the group of letters that he wrote to Hugh Caldwell which were published in *The Azalean* in the early 1980s (1, 2). The value of these Morrison letters is that they provide historical perspective on events occurring during that time and first-hand comments and opinions about the plants he developed and introduced.

Another of Morrison's correspondents was Mrs. William F. (Corinne) Murrah of Germantown, Tennessee, after whom a Back Acres hybrid is named. In a 1972 letter to George Harding (3), Corinne Murrah stated that she first met Ben Morrison when he came to Memphis to speak to her garden club in 1954. It is suggested, however, from the copies of Morrison letters that I obtained from Mrs. Murrah's daughter (Mrs. Paul P. Wilson, a.k.a. Corinne M. Wilson) in 1992, that the Memphis lecture took place in 1953, since Morrison tells her in a 1953 letter that he "had a grand time in Memphis and am happy if it was of value to you and your club." (4)

The purpose of this is to introduce the letter dated February 11, 1953, that Ben Morrison wrote to Corinne Murrah. Ben Morrison tried to reduce the 454 Glenn Dale hybrids to a manageable series of "family groups." Herewith follows the letter largely unaltered, although punctuation marks and words were added parenthetically for flow, and single quotes were applied to the azalea cultivar names.



Mrs. William F. (Corinne) Murrah of Germantown, Tennessee.
(Photo obtained from Mrs. Paul P. Wilson, her daughter.)

Footnotes

1. Caldwell, Hugh. 1980. "Observations by B.Y. Morrison on the Glenn Dales." *The Azalean*. 2(4): 1-5.
2. Caldwell, Hugh. 1981. "More Observations by B. Y. Morrison." *The Azalean*. 3(1): 1,4-5.
3. Letter from Corinne Murrah to George Harding. November 20, 1972.
4. Morrison letter to Corinne Murrah, dated February 2, 1953.

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, was co-chairman of the ASA's membership committee and chairman of the public information committee, has been a long-time ASA member, and is a frequent contributor to The Azalean.

My dear Mrs. Murrah,

Everyone tells me how confused they are when they are faced with the long list of Glenn Dale hybrids. I know of no sure way to help out except to say that there are certain "family groups" and that one need not have many from each group unless it happens to be something he particularly likes.

For example: I wanted a northern substitute [for] 'Elegans' which is not hardy. I got a whole series of most lovely pinks, better in plant habit and with a fair range of pinks all clear and fine and contrasting well one with the other. They include:

'Alexandria'	'Dawning'	'Modesty'	'Temptation'
'Allure'	'Desire'	'Roselight'	
'Chloe'	'Dream'	'Serenade'	
'Circle'	'Echo'	'Serenity'	

If I had to choose one, it would be 'Dream' with 'Echo' and 'Temptation' close on its heels.

Again: To reproduce the "Kurume effect" but later in the season. Probably too many of these but they are all lovely. Mostly in the coral pink range.

'Captivation'	'Fashion'	'Nerissa'	'Romance'
'Coquette'	'Favorite'	'Opera'	'Souvenir'
'Coralie'	'Gracious'	'Paradise'	'Thisbe'
'Demure'	'Hopeful'	'Peerless'	'Vanity'
'Enchantment'	'Illusion'	'Peter Pan'	'Winner'
'Evensong'	'Magic'	'Pirate'	
'Fanfare'	'Melanie'	'Prudence'	

And I probably missed some! Of these I could not name a favorite, as I like that type of color.

Again if you would like variety in the tall types of Kaempferi habit but with larger flowers and usually a dark blotch on the upper lobes there is another family. I happen to like this type very much and find that it almost takes the place of the darker colored "mollis hybrids."

'Antares'	'Evangeline'	'Mascot'	'Tango'
'Bacchante'	'Isolde'	'Minstrel'	'Tristan'
'Branngaene'	'Jongleur'	'Pied Piper'	'Troubador'
'Bridal Veil'	'Marionette'	'Seneca'	

I like all of them but 'Marionette' and 'Tango'..... probably.

If you should want purples - and some do [,] the following poukhanense hybrids are beautiful.

'Muscadine'	'Templar'	'Viking'	'Zulu'
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A series that is almost uniformly good (all sisters) is:

'Bolivar'	'Elizabeth'	'Kathleen'	'Marjorie'	'Regina'	'Sea Shell'
'Carnival'	'Fakir'	'Leonore'	'Mary Margaret'	'Remembrance'	
'Copperman'	'Gaiety'	'Madrigal'	'Phoebe'	'Rosalie'	
'Cremona'	'Jessica'	'Manhattan'	'Pink Star'	'Samson'	

Of these I could not spare 'Copperman', 'Phoebe', 'Mary Margaret', 'Cremona', 'Fakir'.

When it comes to the large-flowered latish things, I could not possibly make a list for any one. My personal tastes are so definite and are so confused with my interest and pleasure in accomplishing certain goals that I am not too sure of my judgment. All are good. The white and striped whites are all superb. I am not exaggerating. I personally could not do without 'Helen Close', 'Arctic', 'Cygnet' for pure white with 'Angela Place' running up.

For pure pinks:

'Louise Dowdle'	'Crinoline' (white eye)
'Lillie Maude'	'Masterpiece'
'Helen Gunning' (white eye)	'Mavis' salmon pink with eye sometimes

For the purple series: (Lovely too....!)

'Fawn' (white eye)
'Sarabande' (lilac edges with white eye)
'Martha Hitchcock' (purple with white eye)
'Nocturne' deep carmine purple
'Valkyrie' almost same color but earlier

For early white:

'Samite' very early, 'Glacier' midseason, 'Treasure' and 'Sheila' tinted whites.

Very early apple blossom color-'Dayspring' (blooms off and on all winter)

For blazing light red-'Red Robe'. This blooms here from October to April, except when frost takes off the current crop of flowers.

The stripes I leave to your best guesses. Remember that in landscape effect, they make the perfect transition from pure white to solid colors, serving as the "blending unit." Except in a few cases, the stripes are not blatant. I happen to like them, just as I like striped carnations, the old Bizaare and Bybloem Tulips (not the broken Darwins, etc.), and I have been secretly amused to see many a visitor scream disapproval and then end up by selecting stripes as their favorites. The nurserymen confirm this.

This should be enough to ruin any one's sense of what to choose and it may perfectly well be that you will not agree! But there it is.....

With all good wishes, Ben Morrison.

Society News

Proposed By-laws Amendment

At the November 10, 2005, teleconference meeting the Society's board of directors approved a **motion to amend** the by-laws of the Society to be voted on by the membership at the annual meeting in 2006. The motion would add the Web site manager (Webmaster) to the board of directors and reads as follows. (Note that the revised language is printed in red.)

It is moved that the By-laws of the Azalea Society of America be amended so that Article VI (Board of Directors) Article B (Composition) shall read:

“Following the transitions period (Article VI.L.), the Board shall include four (4) elected officers (the President, Vice President, Secretary, and

Treasurer); six (6) elected Directors At Large; the immediate Past President; and the president of each ASA chapter, who while holding such office shall serve ex officio as a member of the Board; in addition, the Editor of *The Azalean* **[and the Webmaster]** shall **[each]** serve ex officio as a member of the Board. The aforementioned persons shall be the voting members of the Board. No person shall hold more than one of these positions on the Board at the same time; if the serving president of a chapter shall be elected as an officer or Director At Large of the Society, the vice-president of the chapter shall replace the chapter president as ex officio member of the Board.”

Nominating Committee Report

The nominating committee of Buddy Lee, Carlton LeMond, and John Migas proposed the following slate of officers to the ASA board at its November 10, 2005, meeting. The board approved the slate.

Candidate for Secretary

Carol Flowers

Candidates for Board of Directors, 2006-2008

John Brown, Ron Hooper, Tom Milner

Background information on these candidates follows.

Carol Flowers, candidate for secretary says her hobbies involve gardening and playing her grand piano. Her interest in azaleas began in earnest about 30 years ago when all the large trees surrounding her new house died. The contractors had filled in around the trees when building the house and suffocated the tree roots. She remembered her college years when she spent hours roaming around the 400-acre Planting Fields Arboretum in Oyster Bay, New York. The thousands of huge azalea and rhododendron plants were magical to her, particularly when they were in bloom. After having all the dead trees cut down, she and her husband decided to create their own mini arboretum on their 1-acre house site. She called the US National Arboretum in Washington, DC, for information on how to grow these plants. The kind folks there put her in touch with the American Rhododendron Society. From the members there, she learned all about propagating and caring for these magical plants. Eventually she and her husband joined the Azalea Society of America and have been active in the Ben Morrison Chapter for many years. She has enjoyed being both chapter treasurer and secretary at various times and also serving many years ago as secretary for the ASA board.

John Brown, candidate for director, and his wife Carolyn live in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains with their three dogs. He has served as the ASA secretary since 2001 and worked on the 2001 Asheville convention committee. Currently he handles *The Azalean's* back issue business and chairs the archives committee in addition to the secretary's duties. The Browns are eagerly anticipating moving into their new house on the same farm (the old house is 200 years old and counting) and starting new gardens. Native azaleas in bunches and batches will be the theme.

Ron Hooper, candidate for director, resides with his wife Nancy in Aiken, South Carolina, and works as an analytical chemist. Ron started collecting rhododendrons while living in east Tennessee. He became an active member of the Tennessee Valley Chapter of ARS and served one term as vice president. He also served as a board member for the University of Tennessee Arboretum for several years, providing specific input on their rhododendron collection. After moving to South Carolina, Ron changed his focus to native plants, particularly native azaleas. He joined the ASA Vaseyi Chapter when it was formed and has become an avid collector of native azaleas. Ron enjoys attending the regional and national meetings of both the ASA and ARS. He has been an ASA board member for the past two years.

Tom Milner, candidate for director, has been retired for two years from a real job (40 years as a helicopter pilot), and he continually wonders how he ever found time to work for a living. His days are spent caring for his plants, mostly azaleas and rhododendrons, both named cultivars and his own hybrid seedlings, in his small one-man nursery. He is a lifetime resident of coastal Mississippi, and has been a member of the Louisiana Chapter of the ASA for 12 years and an ASA board member for the past two years.

Please use the official ballot found on the wrapper of this Winter 2005 issue of *The Azalean* to vote for officers and to vote for the best article in 2005.

The Native Azaleas on Gregory Bald

Donald W. Hyatt — McLean, Virginia

The top of Gregory Bald, a 4,949' mountain in the Great Smoky Mountain National Park, is an open grassy meadow of perhaps a dozen or more acres. What makes this bald unique is that it is populated with native azaleas of the most incredible diversity and beauty. From mid-June into early July thousands of azaleas on this mountain come into flower. Many of us in the ASA now make an annual pilgrimage to the mountain to see the place in bloom.

The azalea population on Gregory Bald is called a "hybrid swarm," a natural occurrence where several species have been crossing with one another for an extended period of time. On Gregory Bald, botanists suspect that four native species, *Rhododendron cumberlandense*, *R. arborescens*, *R. calendulaceum*, and *R. viscosum*, have apparently been cross-breeding for perhaps a hundred years or more. Although the original species are hard to identify, they have now produced natural azalea hybrids in almost every color imaginable... white, cream, pale pink, rose, deep pink, lavender, purple, fuchsia, cherry, scarlet, coral, orange, salmon, gold, and yellow.

I have joined with the members of the Species Study Group of the Middle Atlantic Chapter of the American Rhododendron Society (MAC-ARS) who have been making annual trips to Gregory Bald since 1995.

Since then, I have tried to get back at least once each season. It is not an easy hike, at least for many of us. The Gregory Ridge Trail seems gentle at first as it leaves the trailhead at Cades Cove. It crosses Forge Creek three times, winding through virgin forests and thickets of *R. maximum*. Then it becomes much steeper as it heads relentlessly up the mountain to the bald. From the parking area to the top of Gregory Bald is 5-1/2 miles and involves a 3,000' change in elevation, so I usually allow 3-1/2 to 4 hours each way. It is important to be prepared for the hike by taking ample fluids and rain gear. It is also wise to travel with a group so others are around should there be an emergency. Bears do frequent the park, but "azalea talk" on the trail keeps them away.

First Impressions

I remember my first impression as I stepped into that open bald for the first time. I was incredibly tired after the grueling hike, questioning my sanity for enduring such agony just to see another wild azalea. However, the magnificent vista and the sweet fragrance of the gorgeous flowers all around me completely numbed my pain. For the next hour, I strolled among acres and acres of the most spectacular native azaleas I had ever seen. I was completely awestruck.

Shortly after we reached the bald that day, I also could hear a threatening rumble of a distant thunderstorm. A passing park ranger warned, "You don't want to be on top of this mountain when that storm hits." That thunderstorm moved in quickly, so we reluctantly began our descent as swirling clouds reached down from above to grab the peak. I huddled under my umbrella while heavy rains turned the trail into a slippery stream of mud. Loud thunder echoed all around and I thought to myself, "If I am struck down by lightning today, at least I had witnessed perfection." In recent years, I have tried to avoid hiking in stormy weather.

Many years before my first trip to Gregory Bald, I remember the late Fred Galle speaking of this natural treasure. Now that I have become familiar with the bald, how I wish I could talk with him and learn from "the master." We could discuss specific plants, and I would love to know how the bald had changed during his lifetime. What was it like up there 50 years ago? Fred must have had favorite azaleas on Gregory, but which ones? Are the plants still there? I do remember Fred mentioning an incident that happened on Gregory Bald while he was a graduate student. He was working on his doctoral thesis studying the native azaleas when a bear invaded his camp and dragged off a pack containing all of his research notes. As a result, Fred never completed that degree, but he certainly didn't need a piece of paper to lay claim to the title, "Mr. Azalea."

Favorite Azaleas

After a decade of studying these plants, trying to document the incredible variation by taking photographs and writing notes on specific forms, I do have some favorites. Every time I go to the bald, though, I feel as though I am trying to judge the most colossal flower show. Each season I visit old favorites to see how they have fared over the winter. I photograph them again and record impressions of flower and plant characteristics. I also find new treasures each time, too.

The very first azalea that caught my eye on Gregory Bald will surely rank among my all-time favorites (Photo 1). I call it Gregory Blush*. The plant sits back to the right, just as the Gregory Ridge Trail enters the bald. It has lovely rounded trusses of fragrant 2-1/4" flowers that are white brushed with pink, with a light yellow flare. The stamens and pistils are pink, and it reminds me of *R. arborescens*, a likely parent. Some of the plant's characteristics are unlike the species, though, so I am certain it is a hybrid. Situated next to Gregory Blush is a lovely rose pink we call Gregory Pink Star*. Its 1-1/4" flowers are deeper pink at the edges but fade to white toward the center of the petals giving a picotee effect. It has a light yellow blotch and is lightly fra-

grant. The two plants make a perfect pair, as though someone had carefully selected them for that landscape.

None of the original species that created the swarm are pink in color. Maybe that is why some of us are drawn to the wealth of hybrids in the pink color range. My favorite pink is among the last azaleas to bloom, usually opening in July. We call it Gregory Candy Stripe* because we typically saw the plant in the bud stage before the flowers had opened fully. The buds are deep pink to almost rose-red, and boldly striped with greenish white. The foliage is a bluish green. In the bud stage the plant looks like it is studded with striped peppermint candies, hence the name (Photo 2). Its fragrant 2" flowers open clear soft pink with a light yellow flare, and at that stage the striped effect is no longer visible, and the name seems inappropriate, but we continue to use it anyway.

Another eye-catching pink is one we call Gregory Bright Eyes*. Its flowers are almost 2" inches across in a medium rose pink shade. The blotch is very striking with a broad white area that almost covers the entire dorsal petal. In the center of that field is a bright golden eye, often split down the center by a narrow pink line. The effect reminds me of the wide-open eyes of a cartoon character, which inspired the name.

One of the largest pink azaleas on Gregory Bald grows along the trail near the center of the bald. Anyone who has passed along that trail when the plant is in bloom will surely remember the display. It has gorgeous flowers that are rich rose pink with an orange blotch. We started calling that plant The Pink by the Path*, and unfortunately, continue to refer to it by that name. It surely deserves something more elegant.

Some of the plants have picked up dreadful monikers. For instance, we have admired another lovely, fragrant white with a yellow blotch. The stamens are pink and the buds have a pink blush. It is located in an area where a fellow hiker nearly stepped on a large rattlesnake one year so we started calling it Rattlesnake White*, but it certainly deserves a better name (Photo 3).

Since *R. cumberlandense* is the predominant species on Gregory Bald, admittedly the majority of the azaleas there are in the orange to orange-red range. I really have not had time to study the thousands of orange azaleas up there to determine which forms are the best, but that just means there is more work to do. In 2003 when 75% of the azaleas in the southern Appalachians had blasted buds due to a severe summer drought followed by a rough winter, we did notice one really outstanding orange with 2" ruffled flowers of excellent substance.

The clear reds have garnered more attention, and my favorite is one we call Gregory Christmas Red*. Its flowers are not very large, only 1-5/8" across, but the color is a deep, poinsettia red. Its foliage is dark, glossy green and almost looks like holly. This plant is one of the largest azaleas on the bald and is the likely parent of many other excellent reds growing nearby.

An earlier blooming red azalea that may be the "second best" red on the bald we call Gregory Big Red*. Its flowers are large, in excess of 2" in diameter, but not quite as deep in color. Its foliage is a lighter green and tends to twist slightly. Unfortunately, in 2005 we noticed that this plant had been broken off almost to the base with only one small branch remaining. We have no idea what happened, but we hope it will recover in time.

A plant that will surely make my top-ten list we call Gregory Fuchsia*. Its flowers are star-shaped and larger than average, about 2-1/4" in diameter. When we first saw it, the color seemed to be a deep fuchsia pink, but weather conditions can affect color expression. In some years the flowers of this azalea are just a light rose-red and lack the purple tones of fuchsia. It does have a nice yellow blotch, and its foliage is absolutely wonderful, dark green and glossy. Fuchsia or not, this plant is a winner.

Many of us have admired a small plant with large, star-shaped flowers of reddish purple. It is near the path at the opening of the bald and we called it Gregory Purple*. The color doesn't compare with the brilliant purples of evergreen azaleas, so more recently we have been calling it "Gregory Royal Star" instead. Unfortunately, this azalea is one the most threatened on the bald. Some nearby azaleas of lesser distinction, as well as a host of robust blueberries and brambles have already over-grown this plant. If something is not done soon, this outstanding azalea will soon lose out to its more aggressive neighbors. It would be a shame to lose such a beauty.

Another of our favorites on the bald has gone through several name changes already. It is a large plant with ball shaped trusses composed of many small, 1-1/2" flowers. We first called it Gregory Salmon Balls* because its light orange color reminded us of fresh salmon. Later, we decided the color was closer to that of a ripe cantaloupe, so we managed a name change and started calling it Gregory Melon Balls* instead. Now, having observed it for many years, we realize the flowers can be heavily overlaid with pink in some years, a lovely hue, but nothing remotely related to the color of melon or salmon. Perhaps we should change the name again.

Yellows on the bald are rather rare. One is truly exceptional with large, rounded flowers of the clearest hue. I consider this plant to be the best yellow native azalea I have seen anywhere in the wild, regardless of species. Originally we called it Big Yellow*, since the flowers approached 2" across. Recently, I have been trying to use the name Gregory Sunshine*. Unfortunately, vigorous azaleas growing all around this plant will threaten its existence over the long term. It would be a shame to lose such a wonderful plant.

Many of the plants on Gregory Bald are wonderful pastels and multicolor blends that really defy color description. One of my favorites is a plant we call Gregory Kaleidoscope*. It grows in a thicket of blackberries to the

left of the Gregory Ridge Trail entrance, and I worry that it might get lost. The flowers are a lovely blend of pale yellow and pink blending to near white toward the center of the flower, with a deep gold blotch. The stamens and pistil are red, which adds to the overall floral effect, and its foliage is excellent, dark green and glossy (Photo 4).

Conclusion

The native azaleas on Gregory Bald are indeed special plants. The varieties presented in this article are just a few of the many I have admired most over the past decade. That list has grown to over 50 selections that are in my estimation truly exceptional. I am sure those of you who have been to the bald have your own favorites. If you have names for any of the ones presented here or others you have admired, I would appreciate hearing from you.

For many of us who have been to Gregory Bald, we seem to be drawn back to it again and again. On one hike, I remember speaking to two elderly gentlemen as I passed

on the trail. They must have been in their late 70s or 80s, and were struggling up that mountain with canes in hand and cell phones for emergencies in their backpacks. They admitted that they had to see the mountain in peak bloom just one more time. Perhaps one day you and I will meet on the trail to Gregory Bald. If you have not made the hike, you have missed one of the most spectacular natural floral displays anywhere in the world.

Editor's Note:

*Since the azalea names given in this article are not cultivar names, they are not enclosed in the single quote notation that indicates a cultivar name.

Don Hyatt has been an avid hybridizer of azaleas and rhododendrons for nearly 40 years and was a former director for both the ASA and ARS. He recently retired from teaching mathematics and computer science after 33 years and now maintains a personal Web site that features native azaleas at: <http://www.donaldyatt.com>.



Photo 1. Gregory Blush*. (Photo by Bob Stelloh.)



Photo 3. Rattlesnake White*. (Photo by Don Hyatt.)



Photo 2. Gregory Candy Stripe*. (Photo by Bob Stelloh.)



Photo 4. Gregory Kaleidoscope*. (Photo by Bob Stelloh.)

Aerial Photograph of Gregory Bald Available at 2006 Convention

In 2005, the MAC-ARS group arranged to have an aerial photograph taken of the bald during peak bloom. Many of the special plants we had admired over the years can be easily identified in the image, except for a few tucked under trees near the perimeter. This new resource will help people visualize the bald and its very rare flora. It will serve as a benchmark to help document the evolution of the bald in the years to come.

There is also a picture that is a 'zoom' of a section of the larger aerial view, a place where we have admired several plants including a lovely lemon yellow, a peach pink, and a larger rose pink. These three azaleas can be picked out in the aerial photograph, and the pictures show the same plants as they are growing on the bald. Having such an aerial photograph will indeed be an asset when studying the Gregory Bald azaleas.

Convention attendees can purchase a copy of this photograph at registration.

Azalea Gardens

Tyler Junior College's Brundrett Azalea Garden Grows Up

Becca Anderson — Longview, Texas

Background

Tyler Junior College (TJC) is located in lush East Texas, 110 miles east of Dallas, and is renowned for its academic excellence and its picturesque campus. Blessed with rich soil and plenty of rainfall, East Texas is also home to gardeners who are passionate about their azaleas and roses. The city of Tyler blossoms each October as the rose capital of the South, but it takes away the breath of anyone who travels its Azalea Trail in spring. The Trail is an annual driving tour featuring the flowers of the city's Azalea District.

Early Years of the Brundrett Azalea Garden

TJC enrolls approximately 10,000 students each fall semester and serves about 12,000 credit students during the year. Founded in 1926, the college has flourished because of strong community support and involvement. This trait is beautifully displayed in a series of seven themed botanical gardens that have been planned to enhance the campus, provide educational opportunities for students and the public, and create unique event spaces. The gem on the chain of the linked gardens is the Brundrett Azalea Garden, which has undergone a \$140,000 transformation through the generous support of area garden clubs, under the watchful eyes of the college's Botanical Gardens Advisory Committee and a master landscape architect.

The garden is named for Ina Brundrett, whose passion for azaleas knows no bounds. "I could just plant the whole campus in azaleas!" she said with enthusiasm. In 1954, when she was transplanted from South Texas with its mesquite and prickly pear, Ina Brundrett thought East Texas and its piney woods, oak trees, and verdant spring colors looked like the Garden of Eden. She met a lady at church who was a flower show judge and who organized the ladies of the church to do floral arrangements. When the group formed a garden club a few years later, Brundrett joined and began learning about plants. Her friend, Katherine Steas, began moving up in leadership of the Texas Garden Clubs, in District III and later as a state officer. Brundrett traveled with her, eventually rising to state level leadership herself. She also took classes to become a landscape designer and has held national garden club leadership positions and traveled internationally to judge events.

In 1993, TJC had an eyesore—a parking lot with bad pave-

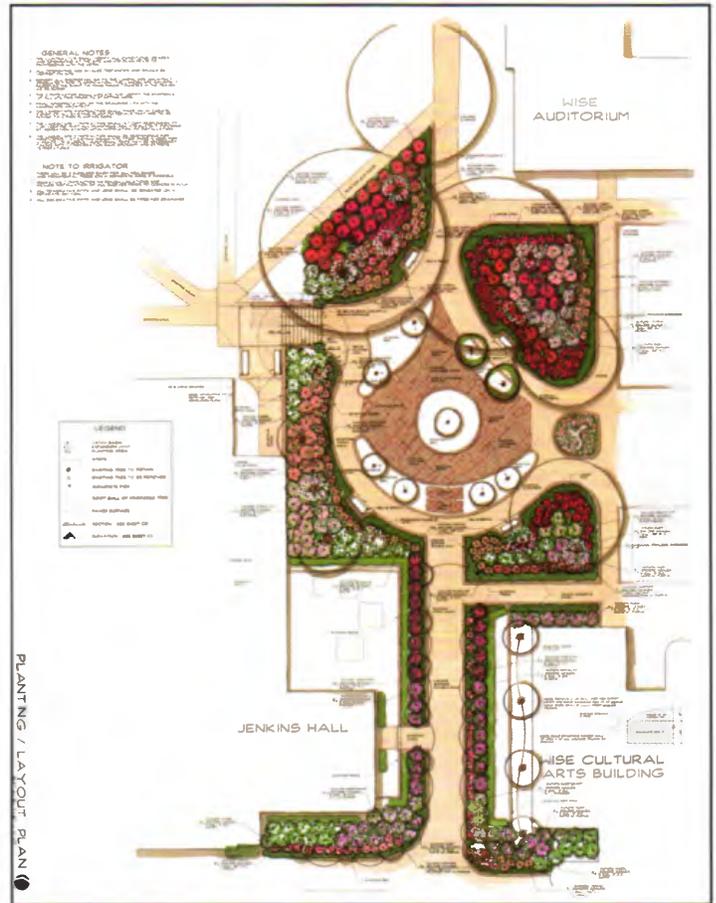


Figure 1. Brundrett Azalea Garden color plan drawing by Burnett and Partners, Inc. (Figures 1 and 2 used by permission.)

ment and not enough spaces to make it useful. Because of her role in local garden clubs, Brundrett was asked to serve on a committee to decide what to do to make this area of the campus more beautiful. The committee members realized immediately that if they planted a rose garden, they'd be forever overshadowed by the Tyler Rose Festival, and so they chose to focus on the other blossoms that Tyler is known for, azaleas. Brundrett was instrumental in raising the funding for the garden, and it bears her name today. It was completed in 1995.

Impact of the TJC Master Plan

Gardens on a campus like TJC are never simple propositions. The funding must be raised from private sources—a challenge for any garden planners. In addition, the area

must serve several purposes at once. In the case of the TJC botanical projects, each garden is to be attractive to both students and campus visitors, provide educational opportunities to horticulture and science classes, and facilitate both easy passage through the campus and serve as enjoyable special event spaces. TJC's Master Plan, formalized in 2001, does not skimp on the importance of botanical areas, and the \$3.3 million series of gardens that is planned will fulfill all of these missions.

The entire multi-garden project required the guidance of a professional landscape designer, and through the generous gift of the late James F. Gatewood, TJC was able to secure the services of nationally renowned landscape architect Naud Burnett, president of Burnett and Partners, Inc., as well as founder and CEO of Casa Flora, Inc. Burnett is the creative force behind The Dallas Arboretum's Margaret Johnson Garden; Palmer Ferndell and Trammel Crow Visitors Center; the Pittsburg, Texas, home of Mr. and Mrs. Lonnie Pilgrim; and the Gardens at Cheekwood Botanical Garden in Nashville, Tennessee. He has won many prestigious national and regional awards and excels in designing gardens that include a strong educational component. He was perfect for the task.

There are inherent challenges in improving an existing garden. What stays? What goes? How does the new design integrate into the overall Master Plan plan for the college? Each issue was carefully weighed, and plans and renderings brought Burnett's vision to life. (For examples, see Figure 1, Brundrett Color Plan and Figure 2, Brundrett Azalea Garden Elevation.) A special "high tea" was held to give garden enthusiasts a first look at the plans for the Brundrett Azalea Garden and the other six gardens on the TJC campus. "Lunch and learn" events laid out the plans

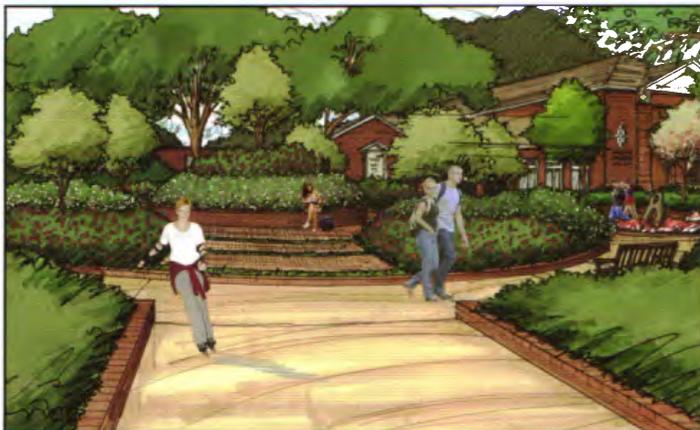


Figure 2. Brundrett Azalea Garden elevation drawing by Burnett and Partners, Inc.

and captured the scope of the projects. It was quickly evident that having one creative landscape architect spearheading the entire project would give the various gardens essential continuity in both appearance and purpose.

New Plantings and Embellishments

The original Brundrett Azalea Garden featured a small circular garden area with brick steps leading up into the

heart of the garden. Steve Brainerd, past president of the Azalea Society of America, designed the plantings. The azalea varieties available at the time included only those that bloomed in the spring. Ornamental trees augmented the azaleas for added color. Four raised lawn areas that contained minimal plantings, and therefore held great potential in the new design, surrounded the garden. There was no seating in the garden.

"We felt that the existing azalea garden's plantings and pavement should be preserved," Burnett said. "However, we wanted to expand it into adjacent areas to create more planting beds, new steps to the upper campus commons, and add ornamental trees such as dogwoods (*Cornus florida* 'Cherokee Princess' and 'Cloud 9') and Japanese maples." A *Liriope* border runs as a *leitmotif* throughout the garden beds, and low limestone walls echo the trim of the classic red brick buildings that make up the campus. Recessed benches are scattered through the garden to create unimpeded traffic flow through the area. Seasonal color is sprinkled through the beds and featured in newly added urns placed atop two stairwell columns. Like an artist gently applying background detail to a painting, Burnett sought supplemental plants and furnishings that would highlight the azaleas, never overshadow them.

"The new azalea beds incorporate nearly an entire collection of new varieties of hybrid Encore™ azaleas, which bloom more than once a year," said Naud Burnett. Since this is one of the first such gardens in north Texas where all of the currently available varieties of Encore™ azaleas are located, the garden is now a delightful one-stop display that homeowners can observe throughout its long growing season—and it is sure to attract visitors to the campus. Many of the chosen Encore™ varieties are of deeper jewel tones and will contrast well with the paler shades of existing azalea plants. "It is planned that as new varieties are introduced they will be incorporated into future plantings," Burnett said.

Besides expanding the garden into the raised lawn areas, the plans also call for lining walkways between adjacent campus buildings with colorful azalea displays, thus creating an entrance into the Brundrett Garden from the front of the TJC campus. Mixing varieties in each bed and along walkways brings depth to the roster of plantings and visual interest for the visitor. Each of the four raised beds contains ten or eleven varieties in harmonious splendor, along with the augmentation of ornamental trees and seasonal color.

Community Support has been Critical

The Brundrett garden is a labor of love for many area garden clubs. District III of Texas Garden Clubs has been instrumental in the successful funding of the project, including Azalea Garden Club, Gertrude Windsor Garden Club, Pionette Garden Club, the Tyler Garden Club, and Tyler Area Council of Garden Clubs. In each case, individuals and clubs have made major gifts to the project, with some "adopting" a bed (paying for the planting of it) or a display of ornamental trees, while others sponsored benches.

What about the toughest audience of all? "I think the landscape architect did a great job," said Ina Brundrett. "I'm eager to see the new varieties in bloom. Most of the homes on the Azalea Trail have older plantings, and this will give people the chance to see some newer varieties." As a member of the TJC Botanic Garden Advisory Committee, her work is far from over, though. She's keen to raise enough funds to handle maintenance, the addition of new varieties as they become available, and care of any plantings that need replacement over time.

The official opening of the Brundrett Azalea Garden is timed to coincide with the annual Azalea Trail celebration in the spring of 2006. During the Azalea Trail, people come from all over Texas and beyond to enjoy the incredible profusion of azaleas that decorate every nook and cranny of Tyler and the surrounding communities. With its banquet of new plants, the Brundrett Azalea Garden at TJC is going to attract a lot of attention and traffic.

"We're so pleased by the community response to this project," said Mitch Andrews, TJC Foundation director of principal gifts. "Our Master Plan for the College calls for each of the themed gardens to bring people to the campus, whether they be students, visitors looking for beauty, or area residents who wish to get involved in building Tyler through its community college. These gardens would not be possible without the enthusiastic support of the people of Tyler and the surrounding area. The educational value of the botanical gardens can't be overestimated, and seeing Naud Burnett's vision literally coming to life here on campus in the Brundrett Azalea Garden makes us all the more anxious to move ahead on the other gardens. It's truly a living legacy that the community is building at TJC," he said.



Groundbreaking photo caption. Participating in the August 10, 2005, groundbreaking for the expansion of TJC's Brundrett Azalea Garden were members from area garden clubs, who provided much of the funding for the project. Pictured (from left) are: Annette Findley and LaVerne Gollob, The Tyler Garden Club; Dr. William R. Crowe, TJC president; Maymerle Brown, Gertrude Windsor Garden Club; Ina Brundrett; Linda Whetsell, Texas Garden Clubs, Inc., District III; Linda Dyer, Tyler Area of Council of Garden Clubs; Mitch Andrews, TJC director of principal gifts; Arlene McReynolds, Pionette Garden Club; and Anne Brown, Azalea Garden Club.

Becca Anderson is a freelance writer from Longview, Texas, who writes and does graphic design for a variety of trade magazines, websites and organizational publications. She can be reached via her Web site, www.beccathewriter.com.

Encore™ azalea varieties added to the Brundrett Azalea Garden include 'Autumn Amethyst', 'Autumn Angel', 'Autumn Carnation', 'Autumn Carnival', 'Autumn Cheer', 'Autumn Chiffon', 'Autumn Coral', 'Autumn Debutante', 'Autumn Embers', 'Autumn Empress', 'Autumn Monarch', 'Autumn Princess', 'Autumn Rouge', 'Autumn Royalty', 'Autumn Sangria', 'Autumn Starlight', 'Autumn Sunset', 'Autumn Sweetheart', and 'Autumn Twist'.

New Members

The following members joined the Society as of December 6, 2005.

At-Large

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