

deners. After the gardens opened in 1872 they worked as gatekeepers and tour guides and mingled with Magnolia's guests. If they were still alive, they'd be pleased that Magnolia is seeking older varieties of azaleas to replenish the inventory with pre-1900 plants.

Magnolia was at the forefront of a national effort two summers ago to save cold-hardy azaleas hybridized by Ben Morrison at the National Arboretum in Washington, D.C. that were slated for destruction simply because they were unnamed. Morrison was a friend of the Hastie family that owns Magnolia. The DNA of some of those plants originally came from Magnolia. Therefore, bringing those plants to Magnolia's greenhouse is tantamount to returning Magnolia's grandchildren home for future generations to enjoy.

When Charlestonians are overcome by the summer's heat, azaleas retreat. Magnolia has expanded its azalea garden to include late-blooming azaleas in a landscape designed last summer by two French horticulture students. An expanded azalea garden borders the tram road. In time, Magnolia's guests will gaze across a carpet of color at the end of a nature tram excursion.

So, like those before me, I am witnessing Magnolia's evolution in the early part of the 21st century. With care, Magnolia and its azaleas will survive three hundred more years, and at that time the job of selling its beauty would have long since passed to another likely or unlikely marketeer.

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Doin' The Charleston – Azalea Style

2014 National Convention hosted by the Rev. John Drayton Chapter



Historic Charleston, South Carolina, named the #1 travel destination in the country, is the site of the 2014 Azalea Society of America's national convention. The Doin' The Charleston – Azalea Style headquarters will be the Charleston Marriott Riverview Hotel, overlooking Brittlebank Park, the Ashley River and the Joe Riley Baseball Stadium, not far from downtown. Spend time under stately live oaks hung with Spanish moss, visit the intimate gardens of the old homes, the historic plantations and gaze at the plethora of azaleas as the Lowcountry seduces you.



Charleston Harbor

Come early and enjoy a number of optional tours on your own. Thursday, March 27th, is Glorious Gardens day on the month-long Historic Charleston Foundation's Tours of Homes & Gardens. We hope to have a block of tickets available so you can spend an afternoon touring up to 10 gardens of homes in the historic district. If enough people are interested, we will arrange for a bus for an Island Sip & See tour, visiting the historic Angel Oak on Johns Island, the Charleston Tea Plantation (America's only tea plantation), the Irvin-House Vineyards and the Firefly Distillery, home of the famous Sweet Tea Vodka, all on Wadmalaw Island. And samples are available at each!

Set up for the 2014 convention will begin at 2 PM on **Wednesday, March 26th**. Registration will be from 4 to 7 PM, and will include acceptance of plants for sale, as well as flowers and photos for the competitions. General registration includes a welcome bag of gifts, the opening reception, breakfast Friday and a Saturday morning "Southern-Style" breakfast.

Thursday, March 27th, registration and plant sales will open at 8 AM. A welcoming reception beginning at 7 PM, is an introduction with light hors d'oeuvres and 2 drink tickets per person (cash bar after that). We plan to have Michael Trouche, a native Charlestonian and well-known tour guide, introduce you to the Holy City with "A Primer on Charleston." We may also have a Gullah lady talking of their big part in Charleston's history. Just

to make sure you are really acquainted with Lowcountry traditions, we will teach you to Shag, our State Dance, and to do the Charleston! The silent auction will open that evening.

Friday, March 28th, is plantation tour day. Plant Sales and the Plant and Photo Competition will open at 8 AM. Entries for the competitions will be accepted until 1 PM. Judging will take place from 2-4 PM.



Magnolia Plantation Bridge

Buses will begin boarding at 8:45 AM. We will split into two groups but both will visit Magnolia Plantation & Gardens, the oldest Romantic garden in the country, and Middleton Place Plantation with its more formal gardens, including the famed butterfly garden. Local docents from our chapter, the Garden Club of Charleston, and the Tri-County Master Gardeners will guide you and answer any questions. The plantations are quite large but you will have plenty of time to wander amidst the azaleas. Lunch will be served for both groups at Magnolia. Buses will return to the hotel by 5 PM.

From 7 to 9 PM, Tom Johnson, Director of Magnolia Plantation, will explain how azaleas first were grown outside instead of in conservatories while Ernest Koone, of Lazy K Nursery in Pine Mountain, GA, will talk about the state of the azalea industry since a number of nurseries have gone out of business in the last few years while others are doing better than ever. There will be light snacks and a cash bar.

On **Saturday, March 29th**, you have a choice of tours. The first tour choice is to travel to Cypress Gardens in Moncks Corner for a full morning of exploring walking trails through the swamp and gardens. It's a chance to see bald cypress and tupelo trees and the antique rose garden, as well as stroll along the original dikes from the rice growing era on Dean Hall Plantation, dating from the early 1700s. Be sure to check out the Butterfly House because during lunch, Dwight Williams will explain the role of butterflies in the fertilization and propagation of azaleas. Normally this time of year is the peak bloom of Cypress Garden's azaleas. The buses will drop you in the Old City Market area by mid-afternoon to explore the town, shopping, or whatever you would like to do and will return you to the hotel by 5 PM.

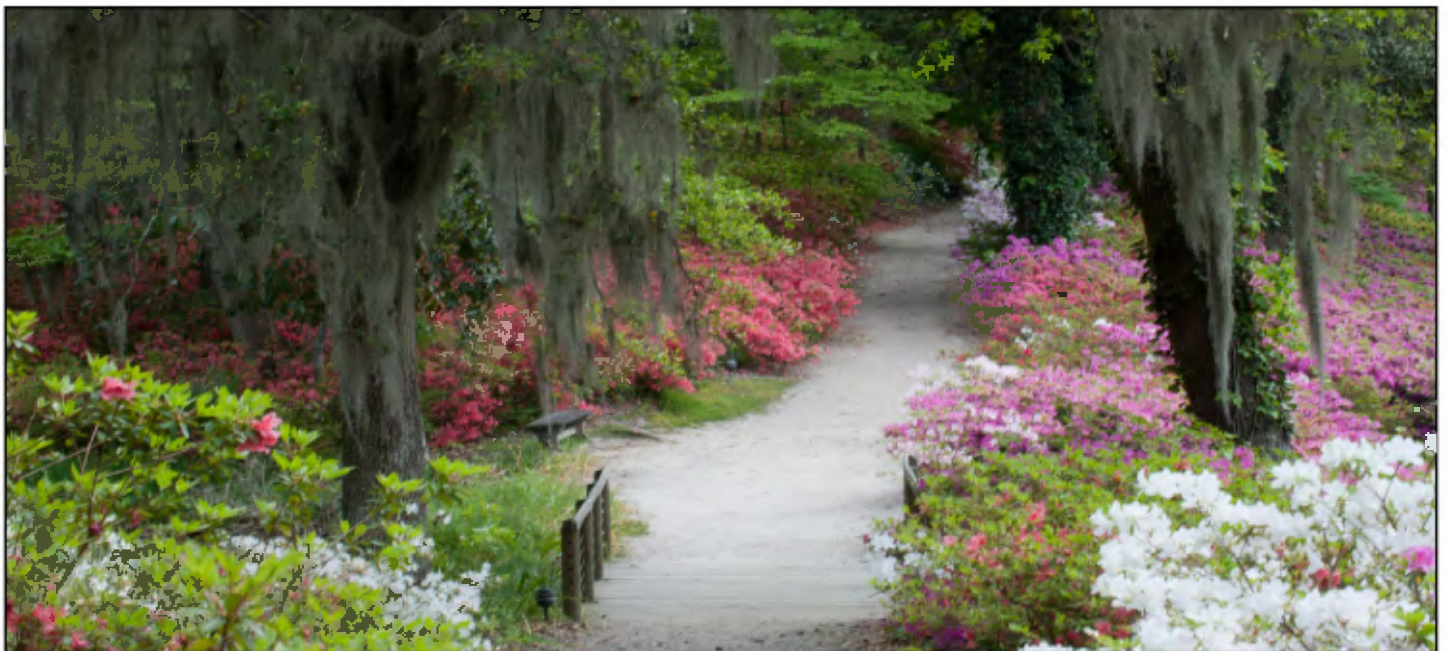
The second tour choice is an intensive tour of Charleston's beautiful historic district. During the morning, professional guides will show you our famous Battery with its elegant town houses built by planters and merchants in the 18th and

19th centuries. A stop at the Heyward-Washington House (c. 1772) showcases the finest collection of Charleston-made furniture and the only original kitchen building open to the public. Another stop will be Mrs. Whaley's Garden, an intimate and charming space designed by the early 20th century landscape architect Loutrel Briggs. Also included will be St. Michael's Church, the oldest church building in the city, 18th Century Rainbow Row, made famous by Porgie & Bess, and many other points of interest. At 12:15, you will board one of Spiritline Cruises' boats for a private harbor historic tour, including lunch. After the tour, buses will drop you at the Old City Market (time permitting) and get you back to the hotel by 5 PM. This tour is limited to the first 100 people to sign up.

Our Awards Banquet and Meeting will be 7 to 10 PM. The silent auction will end at 9 PM. Enjoy a buffet of our best Southern specialty tastes along with a cash bar. Think she-crab soup, fish with smoked cheddar grits, and many other local delicacies. Our keynote speaker is Mary Roper, Garden Director of the Asticou Azalea Garden in Northeast Harbor, ME. This is an old and truly unique collection of azaleas, mainly from the mountainous regions of the U.S. and Japan. It was started by Beatrix Ferrand at her Reef Point estate. In 1956, Charles Savage purchased the plants and created Asticou to preserve the unique plants. Also speaking will be **Robert "Buddy" Lee**, the inventor of the Encore® Azalea and now Director of Plant Innovations for Plant Development Services at the company. He is also a board member of the International Plant Propagators Society – Southern Region and a past president of the Azalea Society of America.

Sunday is a day on your own. We will have many suggestions of places to visit either in Charleston or on your way home listed on our website and in your welcome bags.

Visit www.nationalazaleaconvention2014.org for updates and registration.



Magnolia Plantation Path