

2015 ASA Convention

Texas Forest Country—Azalea Trails and Gardens

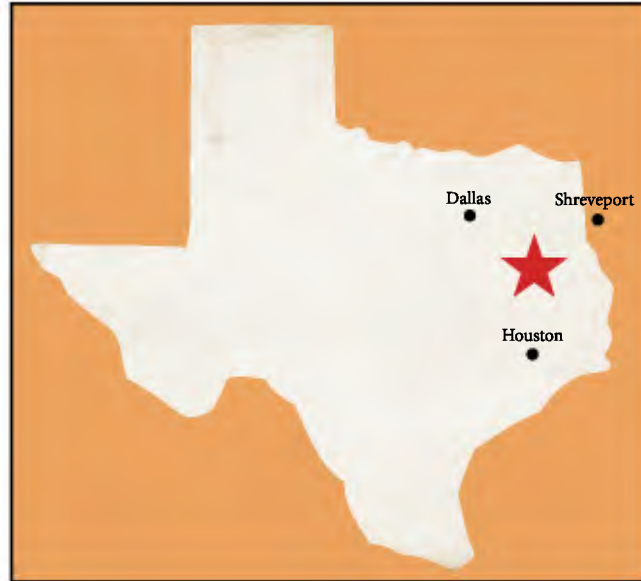
Barbara Stump, Nacogdoches, Texas

Our convention organizing committee welcomes you to a Texas you may not know. Think large public gardens and secluded private gardens shaded by loblolly pines, stately magnolia trees, and redbud and dogwood trees, not desert sand or acres of cactus. Join us March 26-29 in our magical small town that is bursting with pride to welcome you back. In 2014 we received official designation by the Texas State Legislature as the Garden

Capital of Texas, which speaks to the efforts of many local citizens, garden clubs, civic leaders, and Texas Chapter ASA members. The 68-acre Stephen F. Austin State University horticulture-program SFA Gardens helped to make our town a gardener's paradise. Plus, Nacogdoches was the very first officially recognized ASA Azalea City of America in 2004, with Buddy Lee doing the honors.

For those of you who visited us for the 2007 ASA Convention, some of this is a little repetitious, but folks from our newest chapters need to keep in mind that we are a USDA Zone 8b climate, and capable of growing a great diversity of azaleas, camellias, hydrangeas, and Japanese maples, without resorting to frost protection. Think hours, not months, of freezing weather. This is "balanced" by months of 85 to high 90s in the summer, so shade and water are still concerns. Being located in the Pineywoods ecological region that stretches eastward into the Carolinas, we are a crossroads of native trees and shrubs from diverse habitats--savannahs, swamps, creek beds, shady woodlands. This will show up in our garden visits and the plant sale.

So where is Nacogdoches? We are in northeast Texas (130 miles north of Houston, 200 miles southeast of Dallas-Fort Worth, 300 miles east of Austin, 340 miles east of San Antonio, and 96 miles west of Shreveport,



Louisiana, all of which have airports with rental car service. As one of our Nacogdoches Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB) ads states, "We've been wowing visitors since 1779"! Nacogdoches has been a crossroads for travelers - Native Americans, settlers, tourists, and business travelers - for over 230 years. Our town sits squarely on the intersection of Texas Highways 59 and 21. The latter is also known as El Camino Real (the King's Highway),

which began as a network of Indian trails and connected to Mexico City when Texas was part of Mexico. It was designated as a national trail in 2004. The combined threads of plant diversity and complex history run consistently through all the events planned for the 36th ASA convention.

Basic Information

This convention is co-hosted by ASA's Texas Chapter and the Ruby M. Mize Azalea Garden, one of the four gardens in the SFA Gardens of Stephen F. Austin State University. The convention hotel is the Holiday Inn Express & Suites, just south of town. You can check in at the Holiday Inn any time Thursday. The convention rate can be extended for a day before and a day after the convention. Please see the convention website for directions and maps, and the registration form on the wrapper of this magazine.

Meeting Sites. Most of our meetings, the Thursday Board of Directors meeting, and Friday lunch will be held on the 42-acre forested campus of SFA's Pineywoods Native Plant Center (PNPC) in our very new Ina Brundrett Conservation Education Center (IB-CEB). The Saturday night banquet and annual meet-



ing will be held downtown in the historic Mast Hall on Main Street. Sunday's board meeting will be held at the hotel.

Transportation. SFA purple-and-white sports team buses will pick you up at the hotel and return you there after each day's events. For those of you who have your cars and prefer to drive yourselves, we'll have detailed maps. The drive is short and easy, less than 10 minutes.

Plant Sale. The plant sale will be open as often as possible, when we're not on the tours or in meetings (see attached schedule). You'll have plenty of opportunities to buy. We're offering both azaleas and hydrangeas, which are wonderful companion plants.

Speakers. Speakers have been chosen to emphasize the diversity of azaleas and other plant materials, and the history and legacy of their use in public and private gardens.

Special Pre-convention Options. If you arrive early, several of our downtown merchants have some special offerings for March 26: a stained glass class, a walking tour around our historic downtown museums and homes, and a painting class at a local art gallery. There will be a nominal charge and a minimum number required. To sign up, contact the Nacogdoches CVB directly at www.visitnacogdoches.com or 936-564-7351.

Event Highlights

**Thursday, March 26
6:00-9:00**

Welcome Reception and First Speakers

You'll arrive in time for the reception and a first look at the plant sale set-up—right by the meeting build-

ing. Dr. David Creech, Director of the SFA Gardens, will welcome you with an overview of the SFA Gardens. Next, Bart Brechter, Curator of Bayou Bend Gardens of the Museum of Fine Arts Houston will present "Hunting old Southern Indica Azaleas—Preservation in Action." We're proud of Bart, an SFA horticulture program grad. Dr. Creech will end the evening with his signature SFA Gardens plant raffle.

**Friday, March 27
9:00-11:45**

Ruby M. Mize Azalea Garden and Mast Arboretum

By 9:00 a.m. you'll be in the SFA Gardens Ruby M. Mize Azalea Garden for 2-3/4 hours of strolling through the 8-acre azalea garden and the 10-acre Mast Arboretum. Both Dr. Creech and Barbara Stump will be on hand to lead tours of the highlights of the two gardens. But, if past experience is any indication, you may just want to prowl on your own, taking lots of photos.



Ruby M. Mize Azalea Garden

The Ruby M. Mize Azalea Garden is now 19 years old, eight years older than when ASA visited in 2007. The collections of azaleas, camellias, Japanese maples, deciduous magnolias, and other unique Dr. Creech-found trees and shrubs have put on great growth, and we've had to begin some judicious pruning. Now there are also 52 benches, so that you can sit and enjoy the views of azalea colors from our over 550 species, cultivars, or selections. We can't wait to show you how the garden has grown and mellowed. This garden is the centerpiece of the annual Nacogdoches Azalea Trail. So much of the collection is due to the support, guidance, and generosity of ASA members through the years as we evaluated new plant material.



Mast Arboretum

To get to the Mast Arboretum, just cross our lovely bridge over LaNana Creek. The Arboretum includes growing facilities for our twice-yearly plant sales and a Timerframer's Children's Garden Pavilion/Butterfly Garden. Dr. David Creech, staff, graduate and undergraduate students have been developing this garden since 1985. As a horticulturist, researcher, and self-avowed believer in 'drifts of one' for evaluation purposes, the garden has collections from Abelia to Zenobia. He will be more than happy to take some of you on a break-neck-speed tour of this garden of diversity. We received the first azalea collections in 1987 when Dr. Creech visited John and Evelyn Rochester at their Dogwood Hill Nursery in Franklinton, Louisiana. Not only did John give Dr. Creech 157 different specimens, he also sent a flat of 41 rooted Kurume cuttings originally collected by US National Arboretum Director Dr. John Creech in Japan and Korea. A number of these are still alive and well.

Noon-1:45

Lunch in the Stump Garden

At 11:45 a.m. we'll board the buses for a very quick bus ride through one of Nacogdoches' four historic districts to have lunch (by one of our home-town caterers famous for her Southern fried chicken) and social time at my house. The home is a 1901 Queen Anne style restored in 2002-2003, colorfully painted, but with modest decorative gable fretwork. Originally built for Philip Sanders, a cotton broker, talented craftsmen used heartwood of the then-plentiful longleaf pine for paneling in the parlor, den, dining room, the beautiful staircase, and the second-floor landing. You are invit-

ed to tour the home and stroll the easy-walking trails through the garden.



Things have certainly grown on the 2-1/2 acre property since 2007, with enough eleagnus, loropetalum, and viburnum to hide the view of the quick-mart across the street. This mixed shrub border design element is based on an age-appropriate Victorian landscaping technique. I reveled in the many colors of azaleas in my work in the Ruby M. Mize Azalea Garden, and my orange, purple, white, and yellow azalea combination under a huge red oak tree is no exception. Since 2007 a new "ravine garden" has been added of Encore® azaleas, a "tamed" white wisteria, camellias and deciduous azaleas, plus a few samples of East Texas "yard art" from recycled objects.

2:00-3:00

Bill Elliott Garden

We'll board our buses at 1:45 p.m. to drive along part of the 22-mile Nacogdoches Azalea Trail and see lovely homes and gardens along Raguet Street. Near the end is the home of Bill Elliott. He's a successful South-

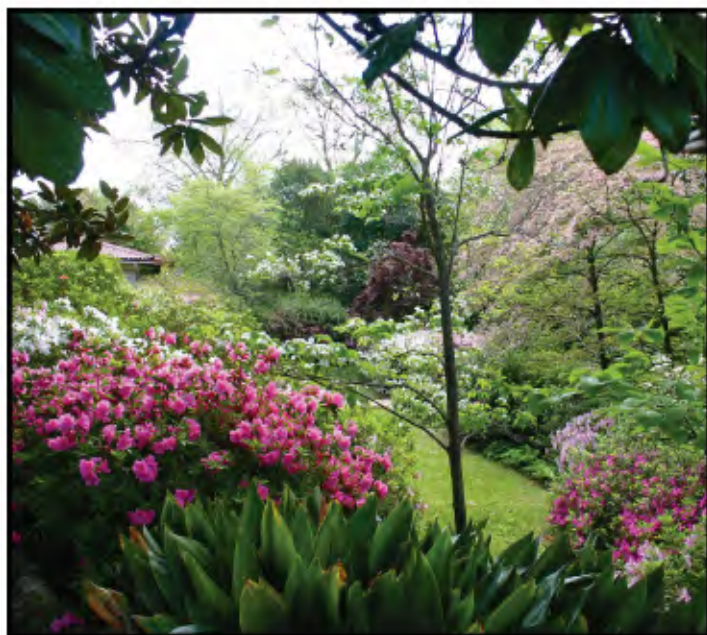


east Texas businessman who is also an avid gardener and lover of azaleas. His late wife Mickey began the process, making sure a large bed by the pool house was planted in early-blooming Glenn Dale 'Geisha' azaleas. Last year's cold spring made this the brightest azalea-blooming spot on the historic home tour in mid-March. Bill frequents our twice-yearly plant sales and is now a true fan of the yellow deciduous azaleas that he saw in our SFA Gardens. These make a very bold statement in his front yard along with pink Kurumes and 'Pink Ruffles'.

3:30-3:45

Nancy Tipton Garden

At 3:15 we'll take our buses back down Raguet Street to see one of the most photographed gardens in Nacogdoches. We'll just stop for pictures from the street because the garden is literally built along a steep ravine, and walking down into and out of the garden would be difficult for our large group. The mature pink dogwood trees, purple "tulip trees" (deciduous magnolias to Northerners), and pink azaleas cascading over the rock retaining wall are breathtaking. Nancy Tipton continues to maintain a garden that has been a "show-stopper" in Nacogdoches since the 1950s.



At 3:45 you'll have the choice of going to the PNPC to browse the plant sale in one bus or take the other bus to the hotel to arrange your evening dinner plans. The plant sale bus will be sure to get the plant sale crowd to the hotel by 5:15 and both buses will bring you to the IBCEB for the evening speakers.

7:00-9:00

Friday Night Speakers and Fun

Ronnie Palmer of Azalea Hill Nursery and Gardens in White Hall, Arkansas will share his 40 years of growing experience in Arkansas, in a short talk about his Satsuki and Huang azaleas and other favorite hybrids. Then Buddy Lee will talk about old and new deciduous azalea developments, privately and in the industry. The surprise of the evening will be the annual ASA plant auction, rounding out the evening to add excitement and keep Saturday evening a reasonable length.



Saturday, March 28

9:00-10:15

Dr. and Kay Furniss Garden

Our first stop at 9:00 a.m. is a country garden that Dr. Ed and Kay Furniss have been creating since 1975. The drive is short, but you'll see some very typical East Texas scenery. The Furnisses moved to the property initially to raise quarter horses. But a SFA Arboretum plant sale sparked Ed's interest in serious gardening. He's been a dedicated plant buyer, testing what worked and what didn't, including a variety of different azaleas. His mature Southern Formosa azaleas flank a grand entry into the farm, but they also have large collections of

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bulbs, daylilies, and grand pink dogwoods in a wooded setting. A number of perennial beds add their blooms in season, including daffodils purchased from Holland and 1-1/2 acres of California poppies. He has been the primary gardener and knows the dirt, soil amendments, plants, and mulch in every inch by heart.

10:30-11:30

Gayla Mize Garden

At 10:15 a.m. we will take a short drive to the Gayla Mize Garden, begun in 2010 by SFA Gardens to help Mr. Ray Mize beautify an 8-acre area at the foot of the SFA Recreational Trails and Gardens. Ray convinced the SFA administration that Dr. Creech and his staff could make an overgrown area into a beautiful, open, colorful garden with walking trails, benches, and picnic tables in honor of his late wife, Gayla Mize. She was a wonderful citizen and the promoter of many garden projects around town, including the downtown Plaza Principal and the annual Nacogdoches Azalea Trail.

One of the key garden objectives at the Gayla Mize Garden is to collect as many deciduous azaleas as can grow in our Zone 8b climate. Currently we have 66 species, cultivars, and selections, but are looking for sources for more. Other special collections include the newest varieties of redbud, some large-leaved rhododendrons, and some of Miss Margie Jenkins' old-time favorite like 'Red Slippers', 'Red Ruffles' and its sport 'White Ruffles'.

11:45-1:15

Lunch at the PNPC and Plant Sale

We'll drive a short distance into town to have a full Texas barbecue lunch at the IBCEB. We're allotting 1-1/2 hours for a lunch and a short time for plant sale peeking and buying.

1:30-2:45

The Hagood Garden

At 1:15, we'll board the buses to go to the Mary Beth and Jim Hagood Garden, located just on the edge of town. We're allowing an hour and a half for garden tours here because of the depth of their native plant collections and mature azaleas.

We'll break into two groups, each with a tour guide. One is SFA Pineywoods Native Plant Center horticulturist Greg Grant, who has helped Mary Beth with plant selection throughout his career. He also helped Mary Beth prepare her extensive plant list (of over 250 different botanically named plants) and will share care and culture tips along the walk. As a published author of five garden books, member of the Southern Garden History Society of America and the Garden Writers of America, and as a true seventh-generation East Texas gardener, he knows what he's talking about. He has degrees in floriculture and horticulture from Texas A&M University. He promises he'll train our other guide to be very knowledgeable about the plants as well.

Mary Beth says she loved plants as a child. When she was older, she was inspired by Bellingrath Gardens near Mobile, Alabama. As a college student, her breaks from studying in the library involved picking

Interested in learning more about 'Koromo Shikibu' azalea? Here is a list of past articles in **The Azalean** that discuss Kurume Azaleas, compiled by **Bill Miller**:

Vol 18, No. 3, Sept. 1996 - *A Few Thoughts on the Kurume Hybrids*, **William C. Miller III**.

Vol 19, No. 3, Sept. 1997 - *Kurume Azaleas --- Personal Reflections*, **Dr. Joe Coleman**.

Vol 25, No. 3, Fall 2003 - *The Palette of Kurume Azaleas: Neglected Treasures*, **Dr. Joe Coleman**.

Vol 28, No. 3, Fall 2006 - *On the Trail of "Stevenson's Collection" of Kurume Azaleas --- An Historical Perspective --- Part I*, **John Hammond**.

Vol 28, No. 4, Winter 2006 - *"Stevenson's Collection" of Kurume Azaleas --- Part II*, **John Hammond**.

Saving the best for last (includes image on that issue's cover):

Vol 14, No. 2, June 1992 - *Some Old Azaleas: Opening Pandora's Box*, **Dr. Ajit Thakur**.
Scanned copies are available to read on azaleas.org.

up books on camellias to decide what she wanted to plant someday when she had a yard of her own. Initially, azalea and camellia collections interested her. She wanted the look of natural and flowing plants. When you see the garden, you'll see she succeeded.

When she and her husband bought her current home in 1980, the house had to be in a shady yard, since her preferred plants needed shade to survive. She began the planting process, never dreaming that what would emerge over time would become a passion. When one bed was packed, another was created. Her collections include viburnums, hydrangeas, azaleas and camellias, plants purchased from local nurseries, SFA plant sales, and through catalogs.

As a teacher, Mary Beth would come home to work in her garden to relax. Mary Beth knows the names of all the plants in her yard and has planted them all. It is a work of love that has been growing for over 30 years.

3:00-4:00

Gloria Durr Garden

As we board our buses at 2:45, we'll head for an in-town garden for a restful stroll through the Gloria Durr Garden. Both of Gloria's grandmothers loved and grew flowers, and she has inherited that love. In college, Gloria took a mandatory course on landscaping and fell in love with the idea of landscaping her own gardens. She and her husband were both originally from Louisiana where they put in gardens in three of their previous homes. Many of the original plants came from Forest Hills Nursery in Louisiana.



When the Durrs came to Nacogdoches in 1972, they built a house on 1-1/2 lots in a residential area. They did all the landscaping and planting around the house without help, then added two other heavily wooded half-lots. Over the last 20 years, Gloria and her husband cleared out many of the trees. As with most gardeners, their landscaping was planned to solve problems, such as making a city drainage ditch look like a lovely creek-bed. Some of the plants came from Forest Hills, but others came from local Texas growers. The side garden is the result of their careful planning, creating what appears to be a lovely park rather than a private garden. There are several resting spots for just enjoying the meandering view of azaleas and camellias along the shaded side of the property. Gloria feels the garden is still not finished and hopes to continue to add more.

This will end our garden visits, but a bus will take those who want to shop to the plant sale headquarters from 4:00-5:15, and the other will go to the hotel, returning to get shoppers back to the hotel by 5:30. Everyone will be picked up at the hotel at 5:45 for the trip downtown to the evening reception and meetings.

6:00-9:00

Reception, Banquet, Keynote, Annual Meeting

All these festivities will be held at historic Mast Hall on Nacogdoches' Main Street, beginning with a reception with cash bar. After a fine dinner, we'll be entertained by Dr. Jared Barnes, lately of North Carolina State but now our newest SFA Associate Professor of Horticulture. He will share not only his favorite plants to pair with rhododendrons, but also his experiences learning about this great genus with friends. We'll close the night with the annual meeting. Afterward, you'll be able to see what the nightlife is like on our brick streets or head back to the hotel on the buses.

Contact Info

(More listed on the registration form)

Barbara Stump
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Nacogdoches Azalea Trail Website
www.nacogdochesazaleas.com



Convention Plant Sale

Sherrie Randall, Nacogdoches

The Texas Chapter has been busy planning and organizing the 2015 national convention. Many members are also growing plants for it. Early in 2012, Texas chapter members took cuttings of azalea and hydrangea plants in Stephen F. Austin University's Ruby M. Mize Azalea Garden. The azalea cultivars picked are either favorites of **Barbara Stump**, **Dr. David Creech** or **Margie Jenkins**, so plan on being wowed. This selection includes Huangs, Kaempferi, Back Acres, Glenn Dale, Southern Indian, and more. In addition, the evergreen cuttings are double-stuck, so you'll be getting two well-rooted cuttings for the price of one! Some cultivars will be available in two pot sizes to accommodate people who are flying in; so, don't forget a good size carry-on bag. The sale also includes Aromi and austrinum deciduous azaleas grown from liners (thanks, **Maarten van der Giessen** and **J Jackson**). Our chosen companion plant, hydrangea, will also be available in two sizes. There will be a nice mix of lacecaps, mopheads, and one quercifolia--all chapter member favorites.

Overall, this has been quite an eye-opening learning experience. Our lessons learned could be another article in itself!

Sherrie Randall is the 2015 convention plant sale co-chairman.

Convention Schedule Summary

Thursday, March 26, 2015

Hotel check-in, registration 1:00-5:00pm
Optional downtown activities
10:00am-noon; 1:00-4:00pm
Plant Sale—2:00-7:00
Board Meeting—2:00-4:00pm
Dinner on your own
Bus pickup at hotel—5:45pm
Reception—6:00-7:00pm
Welcome & Speakers & SFA Plant Raffle—7:00-9:00pm
Buses return to hotel—9:15pm

Friday, March 27, 2015

Breakfast at hotel—6:30-8:45am
Bus pickup at hotel for tours—8:45am
Tours—9:00am-4:00pm
Bus return to hotel—4:15, 5:15pm
Plant Sale—4:00-7:00pm
Dinner on your own
Bus pickup at hotel—5:45pm
Speakers & Plant Auction—7:00-9:00pm
Buses return to hotel—9:15pm

Saturday, March 28, 2015

Breakfast at hotel—6:30-8:45am
Bus pickup at hotel for tours—8:45am
Tours—9:00am-4:00pm
Lunch and Plant Sale—11:45am-1:15pm
Bus return to hotel—4:15, 5:15pm
Plant Sale—4:00-6:00pm
Bus pickup at hotel—5:45pm
Reception—6:00-7:00pm
Banquet, Keynote, Annual Meeting—7:00-9:00pm
Buses return to hotel—9:15pm

Sunday, March 29, 2015

Hotel checkout
Board meeting (at hotel)—8:00-10:00am
Last plant sales—8:00am-noon