

# Chapter News and New Members

[We proudly publish news of chapter activities as a way of keeping in touch and sharing ideas for meetings and projects. But that news needs to be sent to [theazalean@gmail.com](mailto:theazalean@gmail.com) to make it into this column. The deadline for the Fall 2017 issue is July 1, 2017. I hope to hear from all chapters by that date. And, welcome to all the new members, Ed.]

## Alabamense Chapter

*Patrick Thompson, President*

The Davis Arboretum hosted its first Auburn Azalea Festival on April 15th. Hundreds of people participated in the event. The arboretum and volunteers from the Alabamense Chapter put on a plant sale featuring native species, Auburn Azaleas, Aromi and Confederate hybrids. Auburn's Natural History Museum brought live animals and artifacts to share. Local makers sold crafts, and student bands provided live music for the event (see Fig. 1). This was an effort to get Auburn one step closer to becoming recognized by ASA as an official Azalea City.

**New members:** Morgan Beadles and Sally Hodo, Auburn, AL



▲ Figure 1

## Louisiana Chapter

**New members:** Melanie Juul, Covington, LA; Eddie and Cindy Martin, Belle Chase, LA.

## Northern Virginia Chapter

*Barry Sperling, Corresponding Secretary*

The Northern VA Chapter started the spring with a new idea from president Barbara Kirkwood: a Mini-Conference in mid-March featuring many short talks and demonstrations on all aspects of gardening. With help from the Hosta Society, Daylily Society, Master Gardeners, and Green Spring Gardens we were treated to ten short talks and a kid's area for hands-on planting.

Barry Sperling spoke on the "Azalea Gardens of Northern Virginia," Don Hyatt on "Native Azaleas: Preserving Native Flora," Joe Gutierrez on "Azaleas for Bonsai," Carolyn Beck on "Propagation of Azaleas," Paulette Royt on "Native

Plants," Sue Clark on "Gardening with our Deer Friends," Charles Kackley on "Planting Trees and Shrubs," Rick Bauer on "The Legacy Project," Janice Kennedy on "Daylilies: The Perfect Perennial," and Dennis Cronley on "Easy to Grow Shrubs." Carolyn Beck and Susan Hedrick worked with the children, teaching them how to plant. (See Fig. 2)

On April 9th the first club meeting of the year featured a talk on "Dirt!" by Barry Sperling, concerning the constituents of good soil for shade plants. VP Lars Larson, secretary Joanne Neckel, and treasurer Paul Beck complete the slate elected last December.

Paul Beck, who has labored for years making the chapter's professional quality website, continued that work on the ASA website, and they both are currently operational and looking great! Dave Banks also made major contributions. To see more:

[www.nv-asa.org](http://www.nv-asa.org)

[www.azaleas.org](http://www.azaleas.org)

We're looking forward to a couple of plant sales and the July 16th cutting exchange, which always brings in distant members looking to expand their collections.

**New members:** Benny and Carmen Moritz, Hayes, VA; Robert and Lainie Pritchard, Lancaster, VA.



▲ Figure 2

## Rev. John Drayton Chapter

*Gloria Jean' Williams, Member*

At our January 2017 meeting, our club president Tom Johnson encouraged club members to write articles for *The Azalean*.

Before joining the local Rev. John Drayton Chapter of the Azalea Society, my knowledge of azaleas was minimal, limited mostly to 'George Taber', 'Mrs. G.G. Gerbing', and 'Formosa'. Imagine my surprise to discover that azaleas were members of the same *Rhododendron* family that my husband and I had observed in the mountains of North Carolina growing wild along the Blue Ridge Parkway.

A number of hybridizers have developed many new varieties of rhododendrons that can tolerate the heat and humidity in the Charleston area. Magnolia Plantation and Gardens has introduced many of these rhododendrons along with a dedicated “Native Azalea Garden”, an extensive Encore® Azalea collection, and hundreds of Tom Johnson’s azalea seedlings.

Our personal collection of azaleas consisted primarily of ‘George Taber’ and ‘Mrs. G.G. Gerbing’, but the collection is now expanding to include many of these new hybrids. What a great hobby! We expect the next blooming season to be glorious. What a great place to be any time of year.

**New members:** Gregg and Kelli Huff, Colleen and Raymond Martin, Janis and Tom Orshal, and Susan Straub, Summerville, SC; Gracie and Veronica Smiley, Wadmalaw, SC, and Zach and Jacqui Jeanes and Jay and Helen Walker, Charleston, SC.

## Texas Chapter

*Sherrie Randall, Secretary*

Texas Chapter members celebrated the arrival of Spring with three separate activities in March. First up was a trip south to Jasper county in search of native azaleas. Led by local native plant experts Jerrell and Darrell Durham, members trekked through uninhabited lands to view these beautiful flowering natives. One area rewarded us with a spectacular display of spicebush swallowtail butterflies feasting on the flower nectar (See Fig. 3). Mid-March found several members back in Jasper county supporting the Jasper Azalea Festival now in its 29th year. The chapter hosted a booth selling both evergreen and deciduous azaleas. Our biggest seller...the deciduous azalea. The month concluded with ten members attending the annual convention in Hammond, LA.

**New members:** Pat and Linda Alvey, Stephanie L. Franklin, and Anne Mauer, Tyler, TX; Jeffrey Heilers, Houston, TX; Bill Patton, Nacogdoches, TX; Joanie Kochanek, Heidi Meaux, and Paul Smith, Jasper, TX; Mabelle McDowell, Jacksonville, TX.

## Vaseyi Chapter

*Suzanne Medd, Secretary*

Our chapter is getting ready for field trips in April-May. We will visit the North Carolina Arboretum in Asheville and the Biltmore Estate gardens to visit the native and evergreen collections. The Vaseyi Chapter also voted to continue to fund the free azalea brochures at the arboretum. All but one of the 17 azaleas native to the US are in the National Repository Collection, which grows along the Bent Creek at the arboretum. Several founding members of the Vaseyi Chapter were instrumental in developing this popular garden site.

**New members:** Jim and Tami Wagner, Landrum, SC.

## Tri-State Chapter

**New members:** Eugenia and Thomas Kraemer, Dix Hills, NY.

## At-Large

**New At-large Members:** Judy Benson, Becker, MN; Verna Buhler, Duncan, BC, Canada; Ken Cox, Glendoick, Glencarse, Perthshire, United Kingdom; Christopher Fallacara, Levittown, NY; Richard Grenier, Minot, ME; Carolyn Griffin and Jennifer Hildebrand, La Fayette, GA; Melissa Olive, Anderson, SC; Jeff Tucker, Millis, MA; Amy Webb, Lee, FL; John and Louise Wellemeyer, Princeton, NJ.

▼ Figure 3



Photo Sherrie Randall