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The Azalean

Journal of the Azalea Society of America



President's Letter

John Brown — Cleveland, South Carolina

As I write this letter, the temperature outside is a frosty 10 degrees F; the ground is frozen solid; and seed and plant catalogs are strewn across the table. My thoughts are reaching forward to the time that this issue of *The Azalean* will be delivered, and the first flower buds will be expanding in our gardens.

Serious writers have waxed eloquent on the subject of the new life and growth of spring for generations. For me, it is a chance to stir up these winterized muscles and bones to see what is new and improved in my garden, and to see how the winter's root development brings out new flushes of growth and bloom. That special tender shade of green that appears as shrubs and trees sprout new growth seems to indicate a plant's hope and enthusiasm for better things to come. By association, some of that enthusiasm rubs off on me. It trims years off one's apparent age and makes us feel young again. There is no greater reason for devoting the time and energy necessary to having a garden. This special time must be enjoyed in season and stored in memory to be held dear until next year.

The Society archives has a new project underway. The position of Slide Librarian has passed into oblivion over time as personal slide collections disappeared and digital images came into prominence. Past President **Art Vance** is the last recorded Slide Librarian and passed the collection of Society slides to the Vaseyi Chapter for review. The collection included almost 200 slides, representing the work of **George Harding, Emile Deckert, John Pararas, Bill Miller, Ivan Anderson, David Sauer, Bennett**, and others. It included pictures of Glenn Dale, Back Acres, Vuyk, Linwood, Pericat, Chisolm-Merritt, Gartrell, Girard, North Tisbury, Pennington, Robin Hill hybrids, and many species. While the photography is limited to the technology available in the 1970's and early 1980's, the slides are historically significant.

Reports from other Slide Librarians indicate that some ASA slides are still out on loan from years ago. The current archives project is to collect as many of the slides as possible, convert them to digital images, and produce CDs for distribution. The original slides will be stored in the ASA archives at North Carolina State University. If you have, or know of someone who has slides from the ASA slide library, please send them to me. People contributing these historical slides will be given first shot at copies of the CD containing the complete set.

The good news is that Agility Marketing is again providing ASA memberships to garden writers across the country to promote interest in azaleas. Let me be the first to welcome you back to our group. Last year's effort was apparently well received by the garden writers to the point that the effort is being repeated.

The At-Large gift memberships provide us with a large group to bring into our Chapter functions. Chapter Officers can work with Secretary Carol Flowers and Treasurer Dan Krabill to get lists of the members who live in the area appropriate for your chapter. While Chapter membership is not included in the gift memberships, it is a minor cost to gain access to the local groups. The basis for many an excellent article lies in the activities of our local chapters.

The 2008 Annual Convention to be held in Asheville, North Carolina, is fast approaching. You might still be able to make a last minute reservation to join the group. It promises to be another great convention with excellent speakers, interesting garden tours, and lots of sharing, caring people.



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 which are in the subgenera *Tsutsusi* and *Pentanthera* of the genus *Rhododendron* in the Heath family (*Ericaceae*).

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Regular membership is open to all interested parties for an annual amount of \$25; life-membership for one or two persons at the same address is \$500. Members receive *The Azalean* and are eligible for participation in all activities of the Society including those of the chapter with which the member affiliates. For information and a membership application, write to Carol Flowers, Secretary, 700 New Hampshire NW, Apt. 1011, Washington, DC 20037 or visit www.azaleas.org.

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On the Cover

Back Acres Hybrid 'Bergerette' (seedling #32666 X 'Musashino') is tinted white, washed from edges of petals between vivid pink and light yellowish pink, toward white, dots inconspicuous but a little darker, 2 to 2-1/2 inches; 4.5 feet tall in 10 years.

Reference: *Azaleas*, Galle, Fred C., 1987, Revised and Enlarged Edition, Timber Press, Inc., Second Printing 1991.



Photo Robert W. Hobbs

Pace Bald Revisited

John Brown—Cleveland, South Carolina

On a pleasant Wednesday morning in June, three stalwarts met in a driveway on a street appropriately named “Lands End.” Pleasantries were exchanged, and assurances made that maps had been consulted and routes measured.

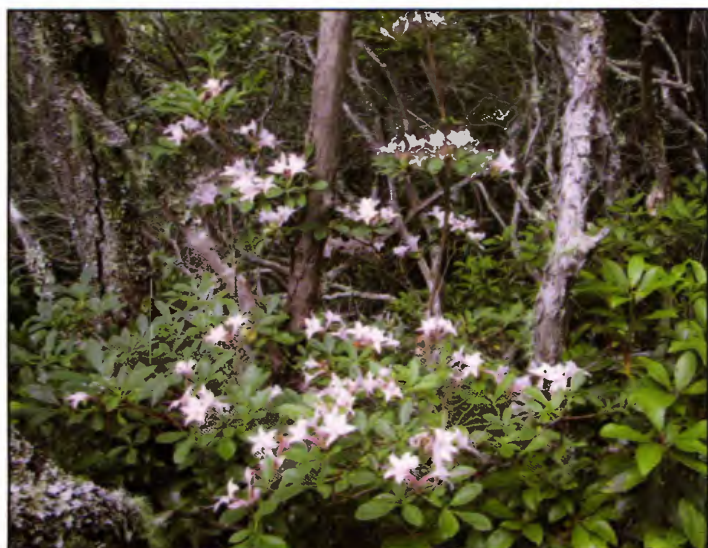
Trip leader Doley Bell advised the group that a short one-and-a-quarter mile hike with an elevation change of 1,200 feet would bring us to the “downtown” section of Pace Bald. Having no documented history of prevarication, the statement was accepted as fact. We loaded the car and began the trip in reasonable spirits.

The objective was Pace Bald, a section of the Appalachian Trail located north of Copper Bald and south of Tellico Bald near Franklin, North Carolina. It was unofficially named after Leon Pace, with an intended reference to Leon’s follically challenged pate. A brief history of Pace Bald was presented in the Winter 2005 issue of *The Azalean*, Volume 27, Number 4, page 80.

Leon and Doley have catalogued some 15 varieties at Pace Bald, ranging from what is thought to be pure species to obvious hybrids. Records of each plant are carefully maintained in a field notebook, documenting the location, makeup, and bloom history. Using a Global Positioning System received as a recent Christmas gift, the plant location is being more accurately recorded.

‘Jean’ lives in the suburbs of Pace Bald. In the local jargon, that means the plant dubbed ‘Jean’ is located approximately 50 yards north of “downtown.” The unfortunate thing about ‘Jean’ is that after a brilliant cantaloupe colored bloom in 2006, somewhere between RHS 24B and RHS 29B (1995), the plant failed to flower this year. Leon and Doley have noted that many plants do not bloom consistently, giving rise to speculation that some limiting factor—light, moisture or mineral deficiency—is causing the lack of consistent bloom.

▼ A very fragrant *R. arborescens*.



▲ *Galax urceolata* in full bloom.

▼ Leon Pace, front, and Doley Bell, with *R. cumberlandense*.



On the current expedition, the group trekked up the north face of the mountain, quickly encountering a series of switchbacks. This was to be expected considering the 1,200-foot rise along the one-and-a-quarter mile route. We felt heartened as we spotted an occasional *Rhododendron arborescens*, whether by the fragrance or actually seeing bloom, along the trail.

After two hours of hiking through unfamiliar territory, we stopped for lunch still not in sight of our goal. One feature of all trips to Pace Bald is the unvaried menu: cold fried chicken and a tomato sandwich. This is the only food brought to the Bald, and one might believe that superstition is involved. During lunch it began to rain, wetting both our sandwiches and our enthusiasms.

Shortly after lunch, familiar territory was spotted, and I was introduced to the collection of plants known as “downtown” Pace Bald. *R. calendulaceum* was, for the most



Photo Leon Pace

▲ *R. cumberlandense*



Photo John Brown

▲ Yellow hybrid with long interstitial growth.

▼ Nice hybrid: *R. arborescens* x *R. cumberlandense*



Photo Leon Pace

part, well past. A few plants had dangling flowers to give the essence of color, and most showed a good seed crop in the process of development.

The best *R. cumberlandense* were in prime condition, but that didn't prevent a glowing description of what had been there last week. In fact, some excellent dark red specimens were recorded. Pure, or nearly so, *R. arborescens* was displayed nicely in its fragrant white, nearly white, and yellow forms. The show stoppers of the day were the hybrids, thought to be *R. cumberlandense* crosses with *R. arborescens*. Even with the limited access to sunlight, these plants show promise of excellent genetics. One can only wonder what could be done with these plants in a cultivated setting.

One disturbing element of the trip was the condition of many of the *R. maximum* seen along the trail. Some of the older, mid-size and young plants had died and left skeletons standing in place. By my estimate, as many as one quarter of the total population of *R. maximum* along the trail had died. While many of the plants were showing signs of stress, others appeared to be thriving.

Although I did not go to Copper Bald, I was told that the conditions were worse than those seen along the north trail. Possible reasons for the problem include drought conditions during the last three years and the Easter freeze last spring. It is quite possible the drought and Easter freeze combined to deal *R. maximum* a deadly blow.

Conversely, no damage was noted on any of the deciduous azaleas. There was no evidence of insect damage and the distribution of the damage seemed to be completely random. It is noted that our examination of plants within 200 feet of the trail does not constitute a study, but it does highlight the need for further investigation.

Galax urceolata (sometimes called *G. rotundifolia*) was in full bloom along the trail in large patches, and *R. maximum* plants not showing stress were beginning to open bloom.

Later review of trail guides and maps revealed that our trip amounted to a tad less than 4 miles each way and the ups and downs made the total elevation change closer to 2,000 feet rather than 1,200. It rained for the entire trip, making footing slippery and conversation limited.

Leon and Doley now report that access to Pace Bald is much better through Burning Town Gap, passing through Copper Bald and continuing for an additional three quarters of a mile to Pace Bald. After a few drowned rat jokes, the group admitted that it was a good day in the woods, and plans are underway for the next trip.

John Brown is currently serving as ASA President with several committee responsibilities, including Archives and Back Issues in addition to duties as Vaseyi Chapter Secretary. He has also served as ASA National Secretary and Director. Current interests include landscaping a new house site that he shares with his wife, Carolyn, and three dogs. Spare time is spent roaming the woods in search of native azaleas with friends willing to share their knowledge, and trying to maintain a semblance of order on the family farm.

The Evergreen Azalea Cultivar ‘Bobbi Gail’

William C. Miller III—Bethesda, Maryland

This article announces the introduction of *Rhododendron* ‘Bobbi Gail’, a 2-1/2 to 2-3/4 inch (6-7 cm), single white azalea with a faint purplish tinge and occasional reddish purple (77B) stripes and sectors. [1] Self-colored flowers (77B) occur but are not common. Usually with two flowers per head, petaloidy is rare, and seven is the usual number of stamens. Stamen filaments are white, the anthers are light brown, and a foliaceous calyx (146D) is present. Sepals are 9/32-11/32 inches (7-9 mm) long and yellowish green (146D) with a slightly darker margin (144A). The color of the spotting in the region of the blotch is variable with age, from grayed-purple (186D) to grayed-orange (164B), and the petals have heavy substance. The leaf shape is elliptic, the apex is acute, the base is cuneate, the margin is entire and the leaf color is green but slightly yellow (137C). In ten years, the plant is 33 inches (84 cm) tall and 54 inches (137 cm) wide.

Origin

In 1947, Ben Morrison, acting director of the U.S. National Arboretum since 1938, initiated the work that was to become known as the Belgian-Glenn Dale hybrids. [2] Morrison’s original plan called for 25 introductions, and he felt this new group would be sufficiently distinctive that they would not conflict with the Glenn Dale clones that were still being introduced. The series of crosses, between an unnamed Belgian-type azalea and several introduced Glenn Dale hybrids, resulted in approximately 1,200 individuals from which only five cultivars were released in 1962.

This story is about B42321-285, one of those candidates that did not survive the evaluation process to be named and introduced as a Belgian-Glenn Dale hybrid. [3] It was

▼ ‘Bobbi Gail’, a previously unnamed Belgian-Glenn Dale hybrid dating back to 1947.



▲ View showing the foliaceous calyx.

▼ Flowers showing typical color and flower form characteristics. Note the uncommon example of petaloidy on the right.



rediscovered by the author in the woods at Glenn Dale in the spring of 1990. The Bell number indicates that it was derived from Florist’s Pink x ‘Treasure’, the same cross from which all of the finalist Belgian-Glenn Dale hybrids were derived. [4]

Other Details

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration meteorological records for the Glenn Dale station indicate that ‘Bobbi Gail’ has survived extreme temperatures as low as -11 degrees F on January 27, 1987 and 18 degrees F on April 1, 1969. [5]

The name ‘Bobbi Gail’ was submitted to Mrs. Jay



Photo William C. Miller III

▲ Landscape view with a yardstick in the foreground demonstrating "wider-than-tall" plant habit and the "off white with purplish tinge" garden effect.

Murray, North American Registrar of Plant Names, by e-mail on August 10, 2005 to determine that the proposed cultivar name was available and that it conformed. She replied by return e-mail on the same day that it looked good to her and that she would reserve the name. Registration is planned.

'Bobbi Gail' was exhibited for the first time in the 2006 Brookside Gardens Chapter's 27th annual azalea show where it won a blue ribbon for Best-in-Class, a green ribbon for Best-in-Section, and was a finalist for Best-in-Show. It is named for Mrs. James B. McCeney (Bobbi), a family friend who, with her husband Jim, is a long-term member of the Brookside Gardens Chapter of the Azalea Society of America.

For classification purposes, 'Bobbi Gail' should be considered a USDA hybrid.

Introduction and Availability

The formal introduction of 'Bobbi Gail' will take place at the 2008 Tilden Azalea Mart sponsored by the Brookside Gardens chapter of the ASA at 8 a.m., May 10 at the Tilden Middle School, 11211 Old Georgetown Road, Rockville, Maryland. A limited number of plants will be available for purchase at that time.

I give special thanks to Jane Kinzie of Kinzie Farms, Inc., a member of the Brookside Gardens chapter, who performed the propagations for me. While the nursery does not ship, it is well within the "drop-in zone" of the 2009 ASA National Meeting that will be sponsored by the Northern Virginia chapter. For more information on the availability of 'Bobbi Gail', contact the nursery at 301-365-4226 or visit the Kinzie Farms Web site at: www.kinziefarms.com.

Endnotes and Acknowledgments

[1] Royal Horticultural Colour Chart (1986 ed.). London: The Royal Horticultural Society. The color designations used in this article correspond to the 1986 Royal Horticultural Colour Chart produced in association with

the Flower Council of Holland, Leiden, the Netherlands.

- [2] Miller III, William C., *The Belgian-Glenn Dale Hybrids, The Azalean*, Vol. 6, No. 2, pp 33-35, 1984. Recently it has come to light that the crosses were performed by Dr. John Creech in 1947 at Morrison's direction. February 7, 1962 memorandum from Dr. Ackerman (at Glenn Dale) to Dr. Skinner (at the U.S. National Arboretum), it states that Dr. Creech made the crosses "during some of his earlier work at this station in association with B. Y. Morrison."
- [3] A Bell Number was a working number assigned to crosses and a means of individual plant identification utilized prior to naming and the assignment of a plant introduction number. This was the 285th individual from that cross. It was removed from further consideration in 1954 when 44000-series Bell numbers were assigned to plants still under evaluation.
- [4] The author was unsure how to treat the name Florist's Pink as it is not always clear what constitutes a cultivar name. In the Belgian-Glenn Dale article published in *The Azalean* in 1984, Florist's Pink was enclosed in double quotes which at the time seemed to befit its status as a working name but not a cultivar name. In registration papers submitted by the USDA in 1962, Florist's Pink was characterized parenthetically as "unnamed forcing double pink Belgian azalea" without single or double quotes. It should be noted however that 'Treasure', the pollen parent, did not appear in single quotes in the registration papers either. In discussing my concerns with Don Voss, he advised against the use of double quotes since they might be mistaken for single quotes. In summary, Florist's Pink is not an accepted cultivar epithet but is a name of convenience used for an "unnamed forcing double pink Belgian azalea of unknown provenance" that was utilized as a seed parent in Morrison's Belgian-Glenn Dale project.
- [5] Special thanks to Susan E. Bentz, Horticulturist, U.S. National Arboretum, Glenn Dale, and Emily Becker, Assistant State Climatologist, Department of Atmospheric and Oceanic Science, University of Maryland, College Park, for their advice and assistance in obtaining and interpreting the Glenn Dale temperature data.
- [6] Special thanks also to Don Voss for his advice and for his assistance in developing a proper description.

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, is a long-time ASA member, and is a frequent contributor to *The Azalean*. Recent azalea introductions were 'Brookside Delight' in 2002, 'Landon Pride' in 1997, and 'Seattle White' in 1995.

Hybridizers: Leave Your Legacy

James Thornton—Conyers, Georgia

In his book *Azaleas*, Galle wrote of “Hybridizers and Introducers”: “Horticultural books all too frequently ignore the work of numerous people who have made fine plants available to us.” I would like to amend his statement to say: “Horticultural writers and societies all too frequently ignore the work of numerous people who have made fine plants available to us.”

Galle goes on to write that some of the blame lies with growers for failure to record and register their plants. I agree, but would add that growers also are not making their work known to plant societies.

But wait, I am getting ahead of myself by not letting you know where I’m heading. You see, I recently found that other than Galle’s list, we have no other source of information available to us about our present day azalea hybridizers. In fact, I am afraid, as in the past, hybridizers’ work, records, and plants will fade away; be known only to a few; or, more often than not, be renamed.

I would like to correct this by asking ASA hybridizers to provide information to develop a new list profiling current work. Initially the listing will include information from “active” hybridizers, but in the future, I will also try



Photo Maarten van der Giessen

▲ ‘Spring Fanfare’ (‘Sunbeam’ x (‘Hiawatha’ x *R. austrinum*)) is one of the many deciduous hybrids created, selected, named and documented by Dr. Gene Aromi.

▼ The hybrid ‘Sandy Dandy’ is an example of the work in progress by Joe Klimavicz.



Photo Joe Klimavicz



Photo Bob Stelloh

▲ The azalea pictured is the creation of Malcolm Clark. Its name is unknown, but research by Bob Stelloh may someday find it. In the meantime, Bob has labeled it “UTG#1” for one of its parents, ‘Utage-no-hana’, which Malcolm loved to use as a parent plant in his hybridizing program.

▼ This unnamed yellow deciduous hybrid azalea is the work of James Thornton.



Photo James Thornton

to obtain information from “inactive” hybridizers as well as those who have passed away.

Once the information is compiled, it will be published in *The Azalean* as well as the ASA Web site. The information will be updated periodically.

Here is the information I need to get us started:

Part 1—Biographical Information

Submit your name, address, telephone number, e-mail address and ASA chapter affiliation. If you do not have an e-mail address, please submit an address of someone who can relay messages to you.

Include a brief history of why and how long you have been hybridizing, what is your ultimate goal in making crosses, and what are your favorite plants to use in crosses.

Describe your environment. Do you have an operating nursery (wholesale or retail), farm, subdivision lot, greenhouse, or cold frame?

Describe plant disposition. Are plants sold (retail or wholesale), used as donations, distributed through a commercial wholesaler, or tested by an outside organization?

Most importantly, provide custodian information to ensure that your records and plants become a part of the ASA history. Is there someone who is assembling and maintaining your hybridizer information? Are the plants being collected and preserved as a group? It is extremely important that this information is recorded. There are several examples of why I harp on the importance of maintaining a written record of hybridizer work.

One rather sad but true story relates to a well-known hybridizer who was diagnosed with Alzheimer’s disease. He no longer remembers he ever had an interest in azaleas. Since no one has data about his plants, his work has been lost.

Another case can be made about the grower of the yellow deciduous plant. At present, no one, other than me, knows anything about its history. That’s because it’s mine! As the saying goes, “Physician heal thyself.” After this article I promise to mend my ways. I will tell you that it is a seedling of ‘Admiral Semmes’ and it is very fragrant.

On the other hand, years ago the late Dr. Gene Aromi and Maarten van der Giessen teamed up to preserve Dr. Aromi’s plants and records. Today his creations live on for us to enjoy.

On an even more positive note, the hybrid ‘Sandy Dandy’ is a good example of the work in progress by Joe Klimavicz. Joe cites his work as fun, and rightly so, but he is no less the professional when growing and selecting hybrids. From the basement to the backyard, on a half-acre subdivision lot, Joe pollinates, propagates and perpetuates his top-of-the-line hybrids. His 99 percent less than the “Klimavicz standard” become throw aways in the dump. No doubt his creations and meticulous records will remain true to their name for a long time and invaluable to all of us.

By the way, ‘Sandy Dandy’ is a cross of ‘Leopold Astrid’

x ‘Girard’s Fuchsia’. It is yellowish-white with yellowish-green blotch, pink center and ruffled single bloom. (Note: Joe is a featured speaker at this year’s convention.)

Having said all of this, I hope it prompts you hybridizers to respond to this survey.

Part Two—Plant Information

Complete the form on the following page, making copies as required to list the plants in your collection. Use the abbreviations shown on the form, such as (E) for evergreen or (D) for deciduous. At minimum, include the plant name or identifier and whether it is being evaluated (EV), is to be registered (TBR), or is already registered (R).

Does this seem like a difficult task? Think about it: Your invaluable work could go by the wayside simply because we, the ASA, didn’t have the data to share with future azaleaphiles.

As Galle said, it took “enormous effort, often frustrating” to make his list. Frankly, I believe it was because the input relied on the response from the hybridizers at the time. Will this happen with today’s growers? I hope not. It’s up to you to leave your legacy.

If you have any questions, please contact me. You may submit your profile by e-mail or regular mail to the following address:

Jim Thornton
884 June Drive
Conyers, GA 30094
Ph: 770-483-1593

E-mail: jimpatsy@comcast.net

The deadline is July 30, 2008. After that time, a list of responders will be published in *The Azalean*. You will be asked to validate data before it is available for use. Images are welcome.

References:

Fred Galle *Azaleas*
James Darden *Great American Azaleas*
<http://www.azaleas.org/azenter.html>
<http://www.azaleas.org/azentersec.html>
<http://www.rhododendron.org/plantregistry.htm>

Acknowledgments:

Special thanks to Bob Stelloh for his work on the plant form as well as his advice and counsel; and to Maarten van der Giessen, Joe Klimavicz, James Harris, and Keri Robinson for their input.

Jim Thornton is an occasional contributor to *The Azalean*. He is a co-founder and the first president of the Oconee Chapter. He has served as a director, vice president, and president of the Azalea Society of America. Jim presently is the membership and public relations chair of the Oconee Chapter.

Please fill out one numbered form for each of your plants, following this example:

Plant e r Jubilant I,u m Mrs Carmichael x Willy
 Type Status Name/number Habit Height Seed parent Pollen parent

Flower S 2" m 7 near vivid purplish red (74A)
 Form Width Season Zone Color

Plant 1 _____ x _____
 Type Status Name/number Habit Height Seed parent Pollen parent

Flower _____
 Form Width Season Zone Color

Plant 2 _____ x _____
 Type Status Name/number Habit Height Seed parent Pollen parent

Flower _____
 Form Width Season Zone Color

Plant 3 _____ x _____
 Type Status Name/number Habit Height Seed parent Pollen parent

Flower _____
 Form Width Season Zone Color

Plant 4 _____ x _____
 Type Status Name/number Habit Height Seed parent Pollen parent

Flower _____
 Form Width Season Zone Color

Plant 5 _____ x _____
 Type Status Name/number Habit Height Seed parent Pollen parent

Flower _____
 Form Width Season Zone Color

Plant 6 _____ x _____
 Type Status Name/number Habit Height Seed parent Pollen parent

Flower _____
 Form Width Season Zone Color

Plant 7 _____ x _____
 Type Status Name/number Habit Height Seed parent Pollen parent

Flower _____
 Form Width Season Zone Color

Plant 8 _____ x _____
 Type Status Name/number Habit Height Seed parent Pollen parent

Flower _____
 Form Width Season Zone Color

Please use these standard abbreviations:

Type: evergreen • deciduous • azaleodendron

Status: evaluation • to be registered • registered

Habit: compact • loose • mounding • spreading • creeping • upright

Height: dwarf/groundcover (<1') • low (1'-3') • medium (3'-6') • tall (>6')

Form: single • double • semi-double • hose-in-hose • double hose-in-hose • spider

Season: very early • early • midseason • late • very late

Color: use RHS Colour Chart numbers, and/or NBS-ISCC color names (NBS Spec. Pub. 440 or Galle *Azaleas* p. 43-44)

Using LDS Genealogy Software for Azalea Breeding Records

Joseph E. Schild—Hixson, Tennessee

One of the great rewards in growing and propagating azaleas is the sought-after beauty of these flowering shrubs. Once I decided to begin breeding azaleas, I looked for ways or means of recording my efforts. My first attempts at recording the hand pollinations were at times clumsy with a number of mistakes, the worst being forgetting to write down what I had done.

I started with standard 4" x 6" file cards that I kept in a cardboard file box purchased at an office supply store. Soon realizing this method was inadequate, I switched to spiral bound notebooks, labeling each as Stud Books with sequential numbers. This method stood the test of time as long as I kept the information up to date. The drawback was the number of pages needed to document a particular cross and all the records of the seedlings. There was also no way I could easily transfer the information onto my computer that I purchased in 1994.

In 1996, I started researching my family history. I looked at what was available in genealogy software and found several that fit the task. At that time I never thought such a program would end up as a record keeping method for my azalea hybrid crosses.

By 1999, I had purchased a newer, faster computer, and had access to the Internet which offered many resources for the amateur genealogist. I discovered the Church of Latter Day Saints Web site and free genealogy software, Personal Ancestral File or PAF 4.0. It has since been upgraded.

In 2003, I was doing entry work on a distant family member when I had a "light bulb" moment. Why not use this program to record my hybrid crosses? I closed the file I was working on and opened a new database. For a few minutes, I studied the format on my monitor. Genealogy software is patriarchal, which I ran afoul of when documenting some of my wife's Cherokee heritage, which is matriarchal.

For several days and nights, I played with the PAF to see if it could actually be used to document hybrid crosses. In the process, I ran into some troublesome automatic roadblocks, such as using a named cultivar as a seed parent in one cross and then as the pollen parent in a separate cross. I solved the problem by assigning the given name as the cultivar name and then the surname as either Pollen-1 (male) or Seed-1 (female), depending upon how the cross was made. Of course, the obvious answer is that each of the crosses would reside in separate data bases, never crossing digital paths.

The real fun came when entering sibling or backcrosses. Oh woe to those who try to make incestuous crosses, because the software will ask you if you are sure. I just clicked OK and went on with the full knowledge that a LDS person

wasn't watching and wondering since this would never see the light of day.

Another situation came up when I started entering multiple children (seedlings) by number. When I reached 20, I started getting pop-ups asking me to confirm the entry. I continued clicking the OK button. After a while, I began to think the software had some sort of intelligence that was watching everything I did and, for no good reason, I started to become a little paranoid.

I leave the sex as unknown until such time as I decide if I will use the particular seedling in a cross. I use the same form to change a name if I decide to put a registered name on a seedling. Otherwise I enter a name in the "also known as" line or the "nickname line."

The form has other options you can access with the Options button. If a plant was given to you and it is used as a parent, then clicking the "sources" button allows you to enter that data or other important information.

After several weeks of playing with the program and having a ball with it, I realized that it would be worth the effort to record all my hybrids. It has photograph entry, various printable reports with indices, and many other options such as notes, allowing me to record the where, when, why, and any other data. This is also a good place to note where the plants reside in my garden or nursery. In some cases, I also included the location of collected pollen from wild plants.

For keeping track of the seedlings, I use a numbering system that is unique to my nursery. For my hybrid crosses, I use a two-letter prefix, four numbers, and a numeral suffix to assign the date of the cross. If a plant does not meet my expectations, the entries I make will show up in the death date. My entries may say "chipper" or "fire" as the cause of death. If I give a plant away, that is the death date and the "how" information is to whom I gave it.

For seedlings, I use the date of germination as the birth date. A pop-up will ask if it is correct or say something to the effect that it has been less than nine months from a previous birth. I just click OK and keep going.

For crosses, I use the marriage bar to show the date and where. It will also show up in the notes. A search tool allows me to rapidly find a particular plant and not have to do a page-by-page scroll-down.

*Joe Schild has been an avid grower, propagator, and breeder of azaleas for 35 years. Joe was the founding president of the Tennessee Valley Chapter-ARS and past president of the ASA. He says he is better known as an azalea nut and chases the natives' bloom each year with many fellow enthusiasts. He is a frequent contributor to **The Azalean**.*

Azalea City News

McComb hosts "Running through Azaleas"

Pike County Chamber of Commerce—McComb, Mississippi

The McComb Rotary Club and McComb Garden Club are hosting the 4th annual "Running through the Azaleas" 5k run on Saturday, March 29.

The event is held in conjunction with the Pike County Azalea Festival, March 24 to April 5, 2008.

The run begins at 8 a.m. at Edgewood Park in McComb. Pre-registration is \$15 and race day registration is \$20. An awards presentation is scheduled for 10 a.m.

For more information, contact Rachel Wilson Michel at 601-684-6700.

Azalea trail bike ride kicks off festival

Valdosta, Georgia

Offering four different routes, the Azalea Festival Century Bike Ride in Valdosta features a gently rolling course on the back roads of South Georgia, passing farms, lakes, and cypress ponds.

Sponsored by the City's Parks and Recreation Department, it is a fully SAG supported event. The century route is 107 miles long. Shorter routes of 75, 49, and 29 miles are also available. All participants receive a short-sleeve shirt. Century finishers also receive a hat.

Set for March 8, 2008, the bike ride is the first event of the 2008 Valdosta-Lowndes Azalea Festival, a two-day celebration with parades, fireworks, kid zone, arts and crafts, and music.

The event begins at 8 a.m. at the South Lowndes Recreation Complex. Registration is \$25. On-site showers and camping is available. Helmets are required for all riders. For more information, contact Sirocus Barnes at 229-333-1861 or visit www.valdostasportsandevents.com.

Little Princess Garden Party planned

By Sarah O'Brien—Nacogdoches, Texas

Little girls are invited to dress in their favorite princess costumes or garden party outfits (magic wands will be provided) for an afternoon of royal treatment during the Little Princess Garden Party at the Ruby M. Mize Azalea Garden on the campus of Stephen F. Austin State University in Nacogdoches, Texas.

The event features refreshment, crafts, party favors, musical entertainment, and a garden tour of the largest azalea garden in Texas. Little princes are also welcome to attend.

Two parties are planned to accommodate all the fairy princesses wishing to attend. The parties are at 10 a.m. and 2 p.m., Saturday, March 29, 2008, and are two of the highlights of the ninth annual Nacogdoches Azalea Trail. The princesses' escorts will want to bring cameras to capture all the magic of this very special day.

"This is a great way to introduce the special little girl in your life to the beauty and wonder of the Azalea Garden at its most spectacular time of year," said event organizer Cheryl Boyette.

Seating is limited and advance tickets are required. The cost is \$15 for adults and \$10 for children. Tickets can be purchased at the Visitors Center, 200 E. Main St. For more information, call 936-564-7351.

"I can think of nothing prettier than a bunch of little girls dressed up as princesses dancing through those beautiful azaleas," Boyette said. "Hopefully, we will make some beautiful memories that both the adults and children will cherish forever."

Queen, Grand Marshal nominations accepted

South Gate, California

Nominations are being accepted for the 43rd annual South Gate Azalea Festival Queen and Grand Marshal.

To qualify, candidates must:

- Be 50 years of age or older;
- Reside in the City of South Gate;
- Have a history of service and dedication to the community; and
- Be available to participate in Azalea Festival events as well as attend grand openings, ribbon cuttings and other special functions during the reigning year.

Nominations should be submitted to the South Gate Chamber of Commerce, 3350 Tweedy Blvd. The Queen's Coronation is March 9, 2008. The Azalea Festival runs March 8 to 16, 2008. For more information, call 323-563-9500.

Tyler presents Azalea Trail home awards

By Justin Turner—Tyler, Texas

Plans are currently underway for the 2008 Azalea and Spring Flower Trail March 14 to April 6 in Tyler. The annual celebration features eight miles of beautiful home gardens filled with colorful azaleas, dogwoods, tulips, wisteria and redbuds.

The Tyler Convention and Visitors Bureau awards prizes in four categories to homeowners along the trail. The awards are Best Display of Azaleas and Spring Flowers, Best Landscaped Yard, Best of Show (a combination of the first two) and the President's Azalea Trail Award. This year awards will be given to homeowners on both trails (Dobbs and Lindsey) so there will be two awards in each category, with only one President's Award.

Homes are judged on a number of different qualities such as unique landscape styles, floral display, garden architecture and use of garden plants. For more information, call 800-235-5712 or visit www.tylerazaleatrail.com.

Chapter News

Brookside Gardens

Charlie Evans, President

The Brookside Gardens Chapter met periodically during 2007 at Brookside Gardens in Wheaton, Maryland. In February, **Mike White** discussed the development of the new **George Harding Garden**, followed in April by **Buck Claggett's** talk on growing and hybridizing azaleas. **Bill Miller** reviewed azalea books with us in October, and at our annual meeting in December **Tony Dove** reviewed his experiences with companion plants for azaleas.

The chapter presented its **Frederic P. Lee Commendation** to **Dianne Gregg** at the annual meeting, and officers were elected for 2008 including **Charlie Evans**, president; **Mary Rutley**, vice president; **Roberta Hagen**, corresponding secretary; **Dianne Gregg**, recording secretary; and **Dottie Murphree**, treasurer.

In 2007, the chapter had three successful spring azalea sales: one at the U.S. National Arboretum, one at the Tilden School in Bethesda, Maryland, and one at Brookside Gardens. **Judy Karpen** and **Debbie White** were co-chairs for the plant sales.

The first weekend in May we staged our 28th Annual Azalea Flower Show with **Bill Miller** serving as Show Chairman. It was a standard show held in conjunction with the Potomac Village Garden Club who was responsible for the Artistic Design Division.

In the Horticulture Division, **Yoriko Chin's** azalea spray 'Tina's Whorled' was awarded Best-in-Show. **Bill Miller** won the Sweepstakes Award for winning the most Blue Ribbons; **Dianne Gregg** won the Designers' Choice Award in the Design Division; and **Charlie Evans** won the Education Award for his exhibit on books on azaleas.

▼ Mary Rutley, right, recently presented the 2007 Frederic P. Lee Commendation to Dianne Gregg.



Photo William C. Miller III

In June, **Bobbi McCeney** hosted the chapter picnic at her home garden, and in September we held our annual rare plant auction with **Bill Miller** serving as auctioneer.

Louisiana

Dr. Allen Owings, President

The Louisiana chapter meet on Sunday, February 17, at the LSU AgCenter's Hammond Research Station. Members discussed plans for attending the national convention in Asheville, North Carolina, in May.

Chapter members **Margie Jenkins** and **Regina Bracy** are speakers at the azalea workshop scheduled for March 29 at Stephen F. Austin State University in Nacogdoches, Texas. Jenkins will discuss azalea production and Bracy will provide an overview of the Margie Jenkins Azalea Garden in Hammond.

In April, a spring crawfish boil will be held at **Jim Campbell's** home in Covington. The group also discussed the Pike County Azalea Festival in McComb, Mississippi which takes place the last week of March and first week of April.

Dr. Allen Owings is working with horticulture students at Southeastern Louisiana University to replant portions of the azalea garden at the railroad depot in downtown Hammond. The garden was originally planted in the mid 1990s. **Buddy Lee** announced plans for a plant expedition on the Gregory Bald Trail in the Great Smokey Mountain National Park on June 19. Several members plan to attend.

Northern Virginia

Eve Harrison, President

The chapter Christmas meeting and party was cancelled due to the threat of an impending ice storm, which sadly did not occur. Chapter members froze their culinary offerings until a springtime picnic and meeting could be scheduled.

Chapter members continue to monitor last July's cuttings, lovingly preparing them for the 2009 convention. We were fortunate to obtain a large number of deciduous azaleas to sell at the convention, and the plants have been re-potted to grow before being whisked off to the convention site.

The chapter has been invited to hold its annual auction at Merrifield Garden Center in Fairfax, and, for the second time in the chapter's history, will again offer plants to the public. Last year's sale was extremely successful, and the chapter looks forward to an even larger bidding audience this August. Members found that having lots of goodies to munch and drink added to the festival-like atmosphere and seemed to nurture the bidding excitement.

Rick Bauer was elected Chapter Vice President, and **Rosie Fields** was elected Secretary.

Oconee

Ruth Mellon, Secretary

New officers were elected recently for the Oconee Chapter: **Ed Mellon**, president; **Keri Robinson**, vice president; **Fred Vick**, treasurer; **Ruth Mellon**, secretary; **Frank Bryan**, editor; and **James Thornton**, membership and public relations.

Texas

Barbara Stump, Treasurer

Azalea Trail tours and events have been organized all around East Texas. A few notable activities involving our chapter members and ASA Azalea Cities are:

March 7, 8, and 9—The 73rd Annual Azalea Trail in Houston, Texas, features two public gardens, The River Oaks Garden Club Forum of Civics Gardens and Bayou Bend Gardens as well as five other private gardens. The River Oaks Garden Club organizes this event, and the Web site for the event lists “organic experts” to consult, and the Texas Chapter is recruiting members at the Forum of Civics at the beginning of the trail. Visit <http://riveroaksgardenclub.org/azaleatrail.cfm> for more information.

March 14-April 6—The city of Tyler has many civic events scheduled during azalea season, from art exhibits and a bicycle tour to a flower show. The main tour dates were March 28 and 30, including a candlelight tour and party. Visit <http://www.tylerazaleatrail.com> for details.

March 15-31—Nacogdoches Azalea Trail events included the very popular “Little Princess Tea Party,” a

photography show, and the annual Azalea Symposium. Held at the Agriculture Building at Stephen F. Austin State University on March 29, the theme is “Secrets of Azalea Gardens, Old and New.” It is a chance for azalea-lovers and tourists alike to hear the behind-the-scenes stories of azalea gardens in the South.

Texas Chapter President and Bayou Bend Gardens Curator **Bart Brechter** will present the historic design of Houston’s oldest azalea garden (1926-7) and tell how he has converted it to a totally organic public garden. LSU AgCenter’s Resident Coordinator **Dr. Regina Bracy**, will present the steps she and her staff took to begin developing the new Margie Jenkins Azalea Garden at Hammond, Louisiana, in 2006. **Margie Jenkins** of Amite, Louisiana, past ASA board of directors member and master-propagator, will present ways to propagate evergreen and deciduous azaleas. **Barbara Stump** will reveal the design secrets of the SFA Mast Arboretum Ruby M. Mize Azalea Garden during a guided tour.

As was the case with the national ASA convention in 2007 in Nacogdoches, this event was co-sponsored by the Nacogdoches Convention and Visitors Bureau, the SFA Mast Arboretum, and the Texas Chapter of the Azalea Society of America. For more information, call 936-564-7351.

Vaseyi

John Brown, Secretary

The Vaseyi Chapter held its Annual Meeting on November 25, 2007, at the Bullington Horticultural Learning Center. President **Doley Bell** opened the meeting by welcoming the newest member, **Marilyn Grist**. **Glenn O’Sheal** presented the Nominating Committee Report and the membership voted unanimously to elect all candidates. Glenn will fill the unexpired term of Director **Dwayne Clayburn**. **April Sanborn** and **Wes Burlingame** will serve as Directors.

Ed Collins presented a convention report. The hotel is reserved; the tours and buses are set; and the speakers are lined up. The biggest need is volunteer workers. There are jobs open in all areas, including bus captain, Bullington host, props managers, plant sale, chase cars, or assistant to anybody.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned in favor of the covered dish luncheon. As a try-out for the convention, the main dish was barbecue from the caterer selected for Saturday’s convention lunch. By all accounts, we picked a winner with the combination of pulled pork and barbecued chicken. It should be noted that while barbecue was the main dish, it was certainly not the only highlight of the meal. Like last year, the dishes overflowed two tables and each dish was superb in its own way.

Society News

National membership meeting planned

The ASA will host its annual national membership meeting at 8:15 p.m., Saturday, May 3, 2008, at the Holiday Inn Asheville - Biltmore West, 435 Smokey Park Highway, Asheville, North Carolina 28806.

The new ASA officers will be installed during the meeting. (See page 83 of the Winter 2007 issue of *The Azalean* for the Nomination Committee report.) A ballot was included in the Winter 2007 issue of *The Azalean* and must be received by April 1, 2008.

Board of Directors meetings set

The ASA Board of Directors will meet from 1 to 4:30 p.m., Thursday, May 1, 2008, at the Holiday Inn Asheville - Biltmore West, 435 Smokey Park Highway, Asheville, North Carolina 28806.

The Board will receive reports on the Azalea City program, North Carolina State University archives, and membership.

A second Board of Directors meeting will be held from 7:30 to 9 a.m., Sunday, May 4, 2008, providing an opportunity for newly elected officers to discuss any new business.

ASA National Convention
Honor the Greats in Two Thousand Eight
May 1-4, 2008, Asheville, NC
For more information visit <http://www.azaleas.org>

Why Timing Is Important in Rooting Native Azaleas—Part I

Aaron Cook—Valdese, North Carolina

When it comes to biosynthesis of chemical compounds, plants are the chemical factories of the world. Plants synthesize thousands of chemicals used for a myriad of functions. Man has harvested and utilized these same chemicals throughout history for food, medicines, dyes, and many other uses.

When it comes to plant phenolics, of which some 8,000 are known, it becomes obvious why we have such a difficult time determining what effects it may have on the production of adventitious root formation in cuttings. Clearly these chemicals did not evolve in plant systems to stimulate or inhibit rooting, but more likely function in plants to provide microbial resistance and to discourage herbivores.

In the majority of cases the phenolic biosynthetic pathways are unknown. In the cases that have been studied many steps and controls in the pathways remain unknown or uncertain. Phenylpropanoid metabolism generates phenolic intermediates and end products that include lignin monomers, flavonoids, isoflavonoids, lignans, tannins, quinones, and sinapate esters (Strack, 1997; Dixon and Steele, 1999; Nair et al., 2000).

The importance of phenolic compounds localization within the plant, its enzymatic liberation in more toxic forms, its binding properties, and its ready oxidation by phenolases or peroxidases certainly plays a role in how they interact with other plant chemicals such as auxins (rooting hormones) and its overall effect on adventitious root formation.

Could high levels of phenolic compounds inhibit adventitious root formation by binding up available auxins? Anyone trying to root native azaleas knows that they root better under certain conditions. My own experiences have indicated that young fresh growth, refrigeration, and removal of terminal buds increase rooting percentages.

I began to wonder if any of these conditions coincided with the presence or absence of certain chemical compounds in the plant tissues. Beginning with phenolic compounds, my students and I began actively examining native azalea stems

to determine when the phenolic levels were the highest and lowest. In order to determine phenolic content, phenolic compounds were extracted from 0.2 grams of fresh matter following Macheix's (1974) method, and the concentrations were estimated with Folin's phenol reagent, a mixture of phosphomolybdate and phosphotungstate used for a colorimetric assay of phenolic antioxidants at 750 nm. Concentrations were determined by reference to standards established with pure analytical grade chlorogenic acid and expressed on a fresh weight basis.

“We were astonished to find that the tissue samples from the lab grown plants were much lower in phenolic compounds than the natural sample.”

As might be expected, the lowest phenolic levels are found during dormancy. Plants don't have to fight off insects and high levels of bacteria in mid-winter. The highest levels are found in plant tissues during summer months. The next question addressed was: does the plant respond to bacteria and insects by raising the level of phenolic compounds? So in 2004 we made thirty clones of a nice form of *Rhododendron periclymenoides* and placed half in a planting bed outside and grew the other half in the lab under semi-sterile conditions. When we compared the chemical composition of both sets, we were astonished to find that the tissue samples from the lab-grown plants were much lower in phenolic compounds than the natural sample. The same gene combination is in both, so the difference must be due to the environment.

According to this data the plants respond to insect and

Four Experimental Rooting Methods for *R. cumberlandense*

<u>Treatment</u>	<u>Number Stuck</u>	<u>Number Rooted</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Dip 'N Grow®	36	13	36%
Soak/Our Hormone	36	25	69%
Soak	36	20	55%
Soak CaCl	36	30	83%

New Members

bacterial damage in the only way they can—by increasing their production of protective chemicals. Armed with this new information, the timing aspect of azalea rooting becomes clearer. It is now possible to understand why azaleas root from new growth and dormant wood, but rarely from shoots taken from mid summer to late fall. The next step was to figure out how to use this information to our advantage.

Beginning in the Spring of 2005, we set up a repeated block experiment using four different methods of rooting *Rhododendron cumberlandense*. Thirty-six cuttings were used in each treatment. All cuttings were taken in early May. The terminal buds and all but two or three leaves were removed from each four- to six-inch cutting. The basal stems were wounded using a sharp potato peeler.

Group one was quick-dipped in a five parts water one part Dip 'N Grow® solution. The cuttings from group two were soaked in cold distilled water overnight and quick-dipped in our own solution of 3000 PPM IBA-K, 1000 PPM NAA and 1 percent DMSO. Group three was allowed to soak in cold distilled water overnight and stuck without any hormone. Group four was allowed to soak in a 0.1 M solution of cold calcium chloride and stuck without any hormone. All cuttings were stuck in 606 trays filled with aged pine bark. All four trays were placed on a 70-degree heat mat under mist that came on for five seconds every 20 minutes between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. Much to our surprise, the group four cuttings which were soaked in the 0.1M calcium chloride solution rooted the best.

Discussion

There are many variables left to consider in this paper but I believe it is a start toward answering some of the questions concerning the rooting of native azaleas. It helps explain why Mike Creel's dormant cutting technique is successful. It also begins to explain why taking cuttings early in the season when phenol levels are low may improve results.

Many people have asked: Why cold calcium chloride? I used the cold CaCl because it is a well known agent in bacterial transformation. Ice cold CaCl works to neutralize the electric charge on the cell wall and membrane. It is used regularly to make bacterial cells competent for the uptake of relatively large pieces of DNA. My thinking was that if gaps in the cell can be produced large enough for DNA to get in, then phenols could get out.

Aaron Cook is a biology and landscape gardening instructor at Caldwell Community College in Hudson, North Carolina. He earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Biology and a Master of Arts degree in Biology Education at Appalachian State University in Boone, North Carolina. He is an active member in the North Carolina Nature Conservancy, Sierra Club, American Rhododendron Society, Azalea Society of America, and International Plant Propagators Society. He currently serves as ASA Vice President.

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A Letter to Corinne Murrah about the Glenn Dale Hybrids—Part II

William C. Miller III—Bethesda, Maryland

In the Winter 2005 issue of *The Azalean*, I presented a February 11, 1953, letter that Ben Morrison wrote to Mrs. Corinne Murrah of Germantown, Tennessee. Mrs. Murrah was one of Morrison's correspondents, and many of his letters to her have survived. They are valuable for the insight that they provide about Morrison and his plants.

In the February 1953 letter, he pointed out that the Glenn Dale hybrids could be characterized into "family groups" in order to make sense out of the fact that there were 454 cultivars. Fortunately, Morrison typed many of his letters although this was before the time of word processors and proportional fonts — and judging from the variable type quality his typewriter was neither electric nor self-correcting. While his typing was not always perfect — it was better than his handwriting.

The Morrison letter that I am sharing here is dated April 9, 1954. To help put the letter in perspective, it helps to know that Morrison retired from federal service on November 30, 1951, but served as a consultant for one year. His official record shows a change of address on March 17, 1952 from Washington to Pass Christian, Mississippi. My interpretation is that this reflects when he left the Washington area.

He had been planning his retirement since the late 1940's and in moments of anger or frustration had threatened to retire at least once before. In the later years, he had an understanding with his boss that he would liberally utilize leave-without-pay status and he exercised it, so his retirement and relocation was not an abrupt change. This letter then was written from the "Back Acres," Ivan Anderson's home just

▼ This is the initial view of the Back Acres as one turned off Montebello Avenue onto the property. The house (center) and detached garage (right) were the primary structures on the property. That is the author's car.



Photo William C. Miller III

outside Pass Christian, roughly a month before the Morrison Garden at the U.S. National Arboretum was dedicated.

The letter begins with a comment about the weather. Evidently, it gets quite hot on the Gulf coast, 59 miles east of New Orleans and 60 miles west of Mobile. Margaret Dowdle, (daughter of Frank Dowdle, the Glenn Dale colleague who helped Morrison make a go of the Pass Christian Nurseries, a commercial effort) commented that visitors were encouraged to ring the large bell as there was no way, as a practical matter, to predict how fully dressed folks might be while working in the azaleas in the heat of the day. Margaret spent her teen years in Pass Christian and took piano lessons from Morrison.



Photo George Harding

▲ The azaleas were planted in long rows or "vistas." This is the view looking north, back in the direction of the house. The notation on the slide indicates that the original image was taken on March 29th. The year is not indicated.

▼ Morrison working in the azaleas. The partial shade provided by the pecan trees is evident.



Photo George Harding

Route 1 Box 142,
Pass Christian, Miss.,
9 April 1954

Dear Mrs. Murrah,

Nearly an inch of rain fell last night so I can relax a little this morning and get a few letters written.

I am delighted that you felt your trip was not only pleasant but rewarding. It would have been dreadful to have taken all that time, for little. The only disappointment from my point of view, and selfish, was that you left before we could take all of you to dinner, at Paradise Point, which I like better than Angelo's, though it is much further off. I hope you will permit us next time to take you all to dinner there.

Of course many more flowers have come out including seedlings, some of which are much to my liking, especially a series of doubles of the Kenwood type, but in light clear colors, from deep red to pale salmon pink, and a few in the lilac to lavender group, with a small group much like Kenwood, i.e. with old rose base more or less flushed with lavender on the top. I have one lovely small seedling, that I feel will replace Bravura, which is a medium size white with a pale rose margin. The seedling is larger, and clearer rose, on the margin.

Of course my weeds now are made hideous with the spray program. On account of the sandy soil, and the heat, I have to water heavily the night before I am to spray, otherwise the spray ruins any wilted flowers and the flowers do wilt from heat in this climate.

Your specific question re Pixie. Any variety that has Vittata Fortunei in its ancestry and have striped flowers, may give sports. The common type is a self colored flower the color of the strip or slightly deeper. The more uncommon type, but it has appeared on Pixie here, is the type you describe, i.e. a pink flushed flower, with or without stripes, but with an irregular white border. I fear Mr. Wilson had it and forgetting, took cuttings from those branches, which of course perpetuate the sport. This is a problem for all nurserymen, but sometimes the sports are far better than the parent. Teresa, is such a sport and much nicer than the variety from which it came, I do not find my note re the parent.

Telen Fox and Surprise were the two seedlings, that gave flowers of this type from the beginning, which only means that whatever internal upset there was, came at birth!

I do hope that your own plants will all do well and that there will be decent weather so that they can show what they can do for you. And all success to the Brooks Place plantings.

I see no reason in the world why you should not enjoy praise for beautiful things. I am certain from what I was told that your country place is grand. And I feel confident that your daughter's voice is all that you say. I shall hope to hear it for myself someday. Then I can add my own small quot. of praise.

As for myself, I love to sing, as you know. I have been very fortunate in my years of study and the opportunity of learning a wide repertoire. Of course, I am old enough now, so that it does not matter too much, whether

I sing in public or not, and aside from the little church, I do not and do not mean to. In a few years I suppose I shall have to stop, for there are times when it takes more effort to keep my practice schedule than I care to admit. Of course, I am pleased that you found it good. It was much more wonderful when I was twenty years younger and the voice was fresher, but then of course I could not bring to the interpretations the full measure of emotion that one does or can learn from living.

No, the church people know only that they "like it". A few who come from New Orleans tell me that it is better than what they get there but they are not judges, so perhaps they are wrong.

Mr. Anderson enjoyed your visit and looks forward to seeing you all again, as do I, and Douglas too!

As far as I know, I certainly would be free to come in the autumn, but I still do not quite know how I would frame a new lecture. I hate repeaters! Let me brood on it, please.

Sincerely,



Referred to as a plantation, the Back Acres was a small 32-acre farm owned by Ivan Anderson. Initially planted with pecan trees, the azaleas were planted out in long vistas or rows. The property had a very modest house and a detached garage big enough for one vehicle which is just as well since Morrison never learned to drive. Despite the modest quarters, Morrison and Anderson delighted in receiving visitors as his comments in the letter suggest.

His letters often contained comments about azaleas. Note especially the paragraph where he discusses 'Pixie', and the tendency of 'Vittata Fortunei' (now 'Vittatum') derivatives to sport. Morrison believed that the flower with irregular white margins (e.g., 'Ben Morrison') was a sport of something else, citing 'Helen Fox' and 'Surprise' which he noted "gave flowers of this type from the beginning." For an understanding of Morrison's model to explain sporting see "Pattern of Sporting," *The Azalean*, Vol. 7, No. 1, pp 1-2. The reference to Mr. Wilson is to Clarke B. Wilson, a nurseryman in nearby Gulfport, Mississippi.

There are many references to music in Morrison's letters. At one time, he considered a career in music. We are indeed fortunate that he chose horticulture and landscape architecture instead. By all accounts, he had a solo-grade voice and derived considerable satisfaction from performing at services at the small Presbyterian church just north on Menge Avenue. It was in the church's sanctuary that he kept his beautiful grand piano. I mentioned the Back Acres house was modest, and perhaps a better description would be "small" or "very small." The speculation is that the home was not big enough to house the piano.



Photo William C. Miller III

▲ Pineville Presbyterian Church is located on the corner of Menge Avenue and Dale Lane, a short distance north of the Montebello Avenue turnoff to Back Acres. It was established October 9, 1877, and provided Morrison a convenient outlet for his musical interests.

▼ Morrison's piano in the sanctuary of Pineville Presbyterian Church.



Photo William C. Miller III

Douglas or Doug, I later discovered was a dog — specifically a dachshund. One has to understand the breed to appreciate Morrison’s comment regarding the dog enjoying visitors. Excellent sentinels, dachshunds are bright, slightly willful, but quite engaging. I speak from experience.

Even in retirement, Morrison was in great demand as a speaker, and as the final paragraph suggests, Mrs. Murrah, who was a major figure in the Garden Club of America in the Memphis area, was endeavoring to line him up for a speaking engagement — apparently, from the context, a return engagement.

Notes:

1. The Morrison/Murrah letters were obtained in 1992 from Mrs. Corinne M. Wilson, one of Mrs. Murrah’s daughters in Memphis, Tennessee.
2. Three of the images are part of a series of slides obtained from the late George Harding. One of the slides has the name J. R. Dunlop and the year 1956 printed on it. Presumably Dunlop was the photographer. The other images in this article were taken by the author in 1991.

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, past co-chairman of the ASA’s membership committee, past chairman of the public information committee, a long-time ASA member, and a frequent contributor to **The Azalean**.



▲ Frank Dowdle returned to Washington in 1961 after the Pass Christian Nurseries ceased operation. He estimated that he left Morrison with “thirty some thousand plants in beds.” Morrison’s figure can be seen in the background. This view gives an indication of the size of the operation.

▼ The modest house that Morrison shared with Ivan N. (Andy) Anderson and a dachshund named Doug faced nearly due east.



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