

The

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# Azalean

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# President's Letter

J Jackson—Trade, Tennessee

Dear Azalea Friends,

I am looking forward to the winter season for study and learning new things. Not being able to spend so much time outside due to the weather here in the Blue Ridge forces me into different modes of behavior that are beneficial to my year as a whole.

The "membership" theme has been a constant in my letters to you because it is so important to the viability of our society. Over the last 15 years I have observed chapters wax and wane, and it is hard not to be discouraged as a once vibrant chapter slows down or diminishes. Aging and changes in our lives cause a shift in interests and the ability to participate. So the constantly changing dynamics of our chapters is only natural.

The value of membership is the basis on which to build. Our members themselves hold an amazing amount of knowledge and experience with growing azaleas and gardening in general. I think more interaction with other gardening and plant society groups would be of benefit to the ASA. Affiliation with educational institutions, arboreta, and public and private gardens are also good models for chapters. Chapter plant sales have proven to be one of the most successful activities in producing proceeds and gaining new members.

Plans and details for our 2017 convention in Hammond, LA, are coming together. I am really looking forward to seeing you next spring. Thanks to Buddy Lee, there has been recent planning for the 2018 convention and from what I have heard we will meet up in Little Rock, AR.

There will be changes to the BOD this coming spring, and a new president and vice president will take up the stewardship of our society.

*Best regards,  
J*

▼ This deciduous azalea is a "natural" hybrid grown from seed by J and Lindy's nursery mentor Zophar Warner who passed away in 1991. It is another "Gregory Bald type" native azalea.



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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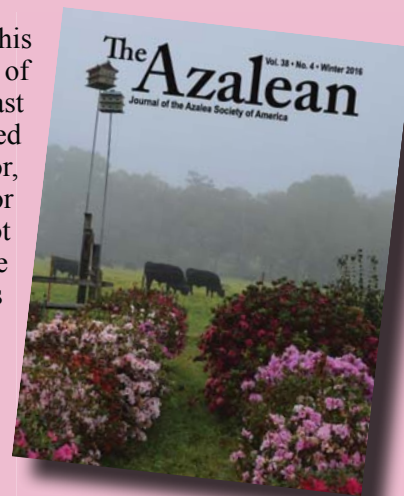
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#### On the Cover

Buddy Lee has used this part of his property for in-ground evaluations of selected azalea seedlings. Over the past 8-10 years, he has grown out un-named personal crosses to evaluate flower color, plant habit, and disease-resistance or disease-tolerance. So far, he has not introduced any of these azaleas. Note the martin houses. He says he enjoys watching the birds fly around the area, and they eat mosquitoes. Lower down are two bluebird boxes. These birds eat small insects. Over the fence is the neighbor's property and cows. Photo Buddy Lee.



# Is it ‘Formosa’ or is it ‘Formosum’?—the System, the Codes, a Resource, and the Historical Background

By William C. Miller III — Bethesda, Maryland

Taxonomy or systematic botany is the scientific endeavor which seeks to organize plants into logical groups based traditionally on morphology (form and structure) and more recently, phylogenetic relationships. It also provides an orderly naming system, binomial nomenclature, which was used by Swedish botanist and scholar Carolus Linnaeus. A major improvement over the confusion of multiple common and regional names that existed before, all plants are divided and subdivided beginning with “kingdom” and ending with “species” utilizing Latin, then the basic language of science.<sup>1</sup> Plant professionals everywhere thus have a universally accepted means for identifying and distinguishing between specific plants.

## The Codes

Under Linnaeus’ system, all plants have a generic name (genus) and a specific epithet (species), and the rules and recommendations that govern are promulgated in the International Code of Nomenclature for algae, fungi, and plants (ICN).<sup>2</sup> Since our understanding of the world continually improves, these rules and recommendations are periodically reviewed and sometimes changed.

Some plants are given cultivar names. Cultivars (CULTIVated VARIetieS) are plants which exhibit some remarkable characteristic (e.g., size, color, bloom period, fragrance, and ease of propagation, to name a few) that make them more desirable than other members of the same species. In the genus *Rhododendron*, cultivars usually have to be multiplied (propagated) by asexual means (e.g., taking cuttings, air layering, ground layering, or tissue culture) to capture and maintain the desired characteristics. The naming of cultivars is governed by the International Code of Nomenclature for Cultivated Plants (ICNCP).<sup>3</sup> In its eighth edition, it too is reviewed periodically, and occasionally those rules change.

## The IRRC, the Invaluable Resource

The International Rhododendron Register and Checklist (IRRC), currently in its second edition with ten supplements, is published by the Royal Horticultural Society in its role as the International Cultivar Registration Authority (ICRA) for the genus *Rhododendron*.<sup>4</sup> The first nine supplements include azalea, azaleodendron, rhododendron, and vireya names registered from January 1, 2003 to December 31, 2013. The tenth supplement includes all those registered in 2014, so it is reasonable to assume that there will be an eleventh supplement in the near future if the number of registrations continues at its present rate.

Consonant with the codes, the IRRC was initially a list of registered cultivar names with descriptions and historical information submitted during the plant registration process.

Over time, names of unregistered plants but known to exist, were added, and today there are more than 15,000 entries in the IRRC.<sup>5</sup>

Unfortunately, not all developers register their introductions or are sufficiently familiar with the industry to avoid assigning existing names to new introductions. Here are three examples: the IRRC lists five evergreen azaleas by the name of ‘Akebono’, which is Japanese for daybreak or dawn; ‘Tricolor’ has been applied to three evergreen azaleas, five deciduous azaleas, and one rhododendron; and finally, ‘Macranthum’ is shared by one evergreen azalea, three deciduous azaleas, and one elepidote rhododendron. One of the functions and benefits of the registration process is to provide a mechanism for ensuring that existing names are not used again. Obviously, a lot of names were duplicated prior to the existence of the formal registration process. Nevertheless, the IRRC is an essential reference for hybridizers and people who write about azaleas and rhododendrons. It can be a life saver, if you don’t remember whether or not there is a terminal “e” in the name of cultivar ‘Betty Anne Voss’ or if you are unsure of the spelling or the use of hyphens with Japanese cultivar names. The IRRC is a resource that can save you a lot of embarrassment.

## Essential Historical Background

All azaleas belong to the genus *Rhododendron*. But it wasn’t always so. When Linnaeus published his *Species Plantarum* in 1753, he created the genus *Azalea* which consisted of six species: *Azalea indica*, *A. lutea*, *A. pontica*, *A. viscosa*, *A. lapponica*, and *A. procumbens* (now *Kalmia procumbens*). One of the rules in binomial nomenclature is

▼ Figure 1 - ‘Formosum’, the immensely popular, mid-season blooming, violet red [RHS 74B], evergreen azalea in Southern gardens.



Photo Maarten van der Giessen

**Table 1-** Comparison of four ‘Formosum’ entries listed in IRRC, P. 462.

Row 3 is the plant of interest.

	Cultivar Name	Category of Plant	Parentage	Flower Color	Synonyms	Informal IRRC Group
1.	‘Formosum’	Deciduous azalea	Unknown	pale cerise red w/ orange blotch		Ghent
2.	‘Formosum’	Evergreen azalea	Unknown	salmon rose	‘Conqueror’, ‘Lateritium Formosum’	Indian
3.	‘Formosum’	Evergreen azalea	Unknown, possibly a ‘Phoeniceum’ hybrid	violet red w/ red blotch		
4.	‘Formosum’	Elepidote rhododendron	Unknown, possible arboreum hybrid	rose cerise		

that the ending of an adjectival specific epithet or Latinized cultivar name has to agree with the Latin gender of the genus. Another rule involves specific epithets derived from modern (i.e., not “classical”) personal names. In this case, the ending would be based on the gender of the person for whom the plant was named (e.g., Dr. George Vasey and *Rhododendron vaseyi*). *Azalea* is feminine, so *Azalea formosa* or ‘Formosa’ would ordinarily be correct. In 1834, however, when George Don, the Scottish botanist, published his *A General History of Dichlamydeous Plants*, the genus *Azalea* was subsumed under the genus *Rhododendron*.<sup>6</sup> At that point, the azaleas he listed became rhododendrons and the rules for gender endings came into play, since rhododendron species and Latinized cultivar names require neuter endings.<sup>7</sup> It is not known who developed the highly popular mid-season blooming, violet-red, evergreen azalea cultivar we know as ‘Formosum’ or when it first appeared.

### The Provenance of ‘Formosum’

No consideration of ‘Formosum’ would be complete without attempting to uncover its provenance (origin). Turning initially to the IRRC, one discovers that there is not only one deciduous azalea, but also two evergreen azaleas, one elepidote rhododendron named ‘Formosum’ (see Table 1), and seven others (two rhododendrons, four azaleas, and one azaleodendron) that are “Formosum ... something else” (e.g., ‘Formosum Aurantium’ and ‘Formosum Elegans’). While it is easy to identify which of the four ‘Formosum’ hybrids in the IRRC is our purple azalea in question, there is no indication in the record where it came from or who developed it. The chief clue is the comment that our ‘Formosum’ is “perhaps a ‘Phoeniceum’ hybrid.” While we

may eventually discover that ‘Formosum’ is Pacific rim in origin, the name is derived from *formosus*, *formosa* which is Latin for finely formed, handsome, or beautiful. If a reference to Taiwan was intended, the specific epithet would have been *formosanum*.<sup>8</sup>

The Internet is a marvelous resource that enables a user to access historical literature from long ago and far away — like 19th century Europe. Occasionally, one happens upon period pieces that reveal the story or at least provide additional pieces to the “who, what, and where” puzzle. Online searching for “Formosa” results in hits on Chinese restaurants, cafes, and buffets, and references to Taiwan. By adding the word “azalea” to the search scheme, you get mostly contemporary nursery catalogs and advertisements, magazine articles, and university Web pages that mention ‘Formosa’ while discussing Southern Indian hybrids. Searches on “Formosum” result in hits on other members of the plant kingdom, especially orchids. The only references to *Rhododendron formosum* have to do with Nathaniel Wallich’s rhododendron which is unrelated to and clearly bears no resemblance to a purple azalea.

In an 1852 publication *The Florist, Fruitist, and Garden Miscellany*, I found a reference to “*Lateritia formosa* (Ivery’s), large, bright red, and fine shape.” Returning to the IRRC, I found ‘Lateritium Formosum’ (Syn. of ‘Formosum’ and ‘Conqueror’), which was the first evergreen azalea listed under the IRRC’s four ‘Formosum’ hybrids (See row 2 in Table 1). There was no other relevant reference to ‘Formosa’ in this document.

Curiosity led me to reach back a little further to George Don’s 1834 publication, *A General History of Dichlamydeous Plants*, which I found online in pdf format. Using the search



Photo William C. Miller III

▲ Figure 2 - 'Omurasaki' and 'George Lindley Taber'. 'George Lindley Taber' is a sport of 'Omurasaki'. For more information about 'George Lindley Taber', see: *The Azalean*. Winter 2007. 29(4): 87-92.



Photo William C. Miller III

▲ Figure 3 - 'Maxwellii' or 'Maxwell'. Described as a form of 'Phoeniceum' [RHS 57C]. It is hardy in the author's Maryland garden (Zone 7).

▼ Figure 4 - 'Judge Solomon', a sport of 'Formosum'. The color is described as watermelon pink.



Photo Buddy Lee

capabilities of Adobe Acrobat Reader, I made three separate searches of the 867 pages for any occurrences of "azalea," "rhododendron," and "Formosa." There was no reference to an azalea called 'Formosa'.

Since I didn't find anything useful in the literature looking back, I set my sights the other way and found Paxton's *Botanical Dictionary*... "comprising names, history, and culture of all plants known in Britain," in 1868.<sup>9</sup> The subtitle sounded absolutely encouraging. There were lists of azaleas, lists of rhododendrons, only a few names that I recognized, and none of them was 'Formosa'.

I wondered if there might be a clue in any of the writings of the diverse but select group of reputable experts available on my library shelf: Wilson and Rehder, Bowers, Hume, Morrison, and Galle.<sup>10</sup> The substance of what I found is summarized in Table 2.

Two conclusions that one draws from surveying the experts are that 'Formosum' is probably a derivative of 'Phoeniceum', and conveying color was as much of a problem then as it is today.

Wilson remarked that *Rhododendron phoeniceum* f. *smithii* is still (1921) cultivated in the Magnolia Gardens, South Carolina. That seemed like too good a connection to pass up, so I sent an email to Tom Johnson, the Director of Gardens at "Magnolia on the Ashley" and president of the ASA's Rev. John Drayton Chapter asking for what he might be able to tell me about 'Formosa'. Tom replied "My understanding is that 'Formosa' was one of the azaleas imported as Belgian Indian azaleas. In the 1933 journal of *The Azalea*, *Camellia Society of America*, there is a category "Azalea Indica" that lists varieties and another heading "Hardy Indians" in which 'Formosa' is listed. 'Iveryana' and 'President Claeys' are the two other varieties listed that are common today. Magnolia, we are now discovering, has many of the early varieties, but being a public garden and not a true botanical garden, the varieties were not tagged and no maps of plantings were ever produced. Since I have been

hybridizing, I have noticed about seven varieties that we have always called 'Formosa' are, upon close investigation, not the same. My guess is that as the Belgian Indians were first being hybridized, if a seedling looked like a 'Formosa', it just received that name. Again, from what I have noticed, the true 'Formosa' is hard to get to set seeds."

Wilson opined that 'Omurasaki' is a "glorified form" of *R. phoeniceum*, and Morrison suggested that 'Omurasaki', 'Formosa', 'Praestantissima', 'Pride of Mobile', 'Vicomte de Nieuport', 'Violacea', and 'William Bull' were derived from *R. phoeniceum*.

On page 166 of Galle's (revised and enlarged) *Azaleas*, the line items for 'Formosa' and 'Phoenicea' that appear in the copy of a page from P.J. Berckman's Spring 1883 catalog describe them as "Lilac pink, large" and "Lilac pink, large, early," respectively.

**Table 2 - Opinions Regarding 'Formosum' from Leading Plant Professionals**

	Authority	Source	Comments
1.	Wilson and Rehder	A Monograph of Azaleas. 1921.	Substantive discussion of <i>R. phoenicum</i> which is not found in the wild.... no mention of 'Formosa'
2.	C. G. Bowers	Rhododendrons and Azaleas. 1936.	"Formosa, mallow purple, early, robust, best of its color — <i>R. pulchrum</i> hybrid."
3.	H. H. Hume	Azaleas. 1949.	In a descriptive list of Indian hybrids — "Perhaps the finest in its color. A robust, strong-growing azalea with good foliage and large flowers, freely produced. It blooms early and is one of the easiest to grow. Rose-purple."
4.	B. Y. Morrison (1)	Article: Notes on Old Varieties of Indian Azaleas, 1950. The National Horticultural Magazine. January 1950.  See The Azalean. March 1985. 7(1): 12-15.	Mentions <i>R. phoenicum</i> , that 'Omurasaki' is a <i>phoenicum</i> derivative and that 'Formosa', 'Praestantissima', 'Pride of Mobile', 'Viconte de Nieuport', 'Violacea' and possibly the double 'William Bull' are 'Phoenicum' hybrids.  "Formosa. Very large and vigorous shrub usually a little broader than tall but tall enough in time. Foliage heavy and persistent, leaves large and coarse; flowers 1 to 3 in heads, very freely produced, Mallow Purple of the color chart, the dots of blotch Tyrian Red, but effective only as warming the color of the whole flower. Stamens 8-10, short filaments."
5.	B. Y. Morrison (2)	Thirty-six page, undated list of cultivar names: "Azalea Varieties Originally at Magnolia Gardens, near Charleston, South Carolina." Obtained from Magnolia Gardens with Buddy Lee's help.	This list of names was generated by Morrison from a book of plantings kept by Mr. Drayton at Magnolia Gardens.  Under 'Formosa Van Houtte', a reference to three names in the Tuinbouw Encyclopedie: 'Formosa' (Ivery) 1846 'Formosa' (Knight & Perry) 1839 or 1939 'Formosa Grandiflora' (Schulz) 1885
6.	F. C. Galle	Azaleas. 1987. <sup>10</sup>	Galle does not list 'Formosa' with the forms commonly attributed to 'Phoenicum' which he characterizes as either a form of <i>scabrum</i> or a hybrid between <i>scabrum</i> and 'Mucronatum'. Galle shows 'Formosa' with his list of Southern Indian hybrids.  Elsewhere he states: " 'Formosa' (probably a 'Phoenicum' hybrid): deep purplish red, 74B, blotch darker, 3", midseason' tall, upright."



Photo William C. Miller III

In Morrison's list of cultivars from Magnolia Gardens (see row 5 of Table 2), three cultivar names warranted further investigation: 'Formosa' (Ivery), 'Formosa' (Knight & Perry), and 'Formosa Grandiflora' (Schulz). In some cases, Morrison provided page number references to The Tuinbouw Encyclopedie.<sup>11</sup> Abe Books, an online marketplace for books, described The Tuinbouw Encyclopedie as an "exhaustive study on the history and the cultivation of azaleas. This cultivation took place in the Flemish region of Ghent (Gent) from the beginning of the 19th century onwards. (Text in Dutch)." All of that was good until it got to the part about the text being in Dutch. Even if I was lucky enough to find a copy, I wouldn't be able to read it. Again, resorting to the Internet, I shot a quick email to Hendrik Van Oost, a friend in Belgium. Hendrik looked up the references and translated the information. On the basis of color, none of the three were candidates for our deep purplish red 'Formosum' of Southern gardens.

Since there was general agreement that 'Formosum' is a 'Phoenicum' derivative, what do we know about 'Phoenicum'? Like 'Mucronatum', 'Phoenicum' was stripped of its species status because it seemed to be a garden form that was not known to exist in the wild. Table 3 surveys how my experts characterized 'Phoenicum'. Curiously, Morrison described 'Phoenicum' as borderline hardy at Glenn Dale, Maryland. The author's 'Maxwellii' and 'George Lindley Taber' weathered back-to-back record cold winters (2013 and 2014) in Bethesda, Maryland, with no ill effect.

We have failed in our effort to discover when and where 'Formosum' came from, although I believe we can assume that, as some have suggested, it is likely a hybrid between *scabrum*

◀ Figure 5 - 'Red Formosum' (from Magnolia Gardens, 2014) The IRRC states that it is a reddish purple sport of 'Formosum' and perhaps the same as 'Ray's Rubrum' and 'Ray's Ruby'. According to Galle, other cultivars assumed to be sports of 'Formosum' are 'Judge Solomon' (watermelon pink) and 'Southern Charm' (deep cherry pink).

**Table 3 - What is 'Phoeniceum'?**

	Expert	Expert Opinion
1.	Wilson and Rehder. A Monograph of Azaleas. 1921. P. 62.	Commonly used as root stock for grafting Indian azaleas... habit, size of flower, and shyness of blossoming resembles <i>R. scabrum</i> ...calyx and character of pubescence suggests <i>R. mucronatum</i> . It could be a hybrid between the two, or just an extreme form of <i>R. scabrum</i> . Lists six forms of phoeniceum (e.g. <i>R. phoeniceum</i> f. <i>smithii</i> ).
2.	C. G. Bowers Rhododendrons and Azaleas ... their origins, cultivation, and development. 1921. Pp. 266-267.	<i>R. pulchrum</i> is equated to <i>R. phoeniceum</i> . 'Phoenicea' is a clone of <i>R. pulchrum</i> . "Low shrub, sometimes up to 6 ft. or more, but often dwarfish. Flowers 2 ½ inches across, rosy purple, spotted dark purple. In some varieties rose-red or carmine. Ten stamens. China and Japan, unknown in the wild. Possibly a hybrid between <i>scabrum</i> and <i>mucronatum</i> . Variable.
3.	H. H. Hume. 1949. Azaleas. P. 63.	<i>R. phoeniceum</i> is also known as <i>R. pulchrum</i> . Widely grown in Japanese gardens, but unknown as a wild plant. Used as grafting root stock. Usually cataloged as 'Phoenicea'. Makes a large compact shrub, leaves are ovate-lanceolate to lanceolate, flowers are large with rather narrow separated petals, magenta in color. Here belong 'Omurasaki' and 'Maxwellii'. Suggests that it is a hybrid with <i>scabrum</i> as one of the parents.
4.	B. Y. Morrison. 1996. The Glenn Dale Azaleas Revised. West and Miller. Pp. 10-11.	Borderline hardiness at Glenn Dale, Maryland. Generally resembles <i>mucronatum</i> , with the difference that the less hairy leaves appear longer and more drooping. The flowers are lilac or light purple. 'Omurasaki' and 'Maxwellii' are clonal selections. Tends to produce only one or two flowers to an inflorescence so that the display is less showy than the Kurumes. At Glenn Dale, it comes into flower as <i>mucronatum</i> is waning.
5.	F. C. Galle. 1987. Azaleas, revised and enlarged. Pp. 128-129.	Introduced from China in 1824 under the name of <i>A. indica</i> . Named <i>Azalea phoeniceum</i> by George Don for its phoeniceus (dark red) flowers that are actually purplish red. Known only as a garden form, it is probably a form of <i>scabrum</i> or a hybrid of <i>scabrum</i> and 'Mucronatum'. Six forms are listed including 'Omurasaki' and 'Maxwell'. Regarding 'Omurasaki', 'Formosum' has larger and less rounded flowers, and is tall, spreading. [Don Voss said, "Stearn at different times describes phoeniceus as purple-red and bright red."]

and 'Mucronatum', and that it was probably discovered in a garden in Japan and eventually found its way to Europe by way of the European plant explorers who combed Japan and China.

How do we know which is the "true" 'Formosa'? After absorbing Tom Johnson's comments and in the absence of any kind of paper trail, we probably don't know which is the "true" 'Formosa'. It is likely, however, that there is one plant that was selected by the "blind hand" of the trade, which has survived the contractions of the market over time to be multiplied in the millions, and which may or may not be "original."

You will continue to see 'Formosa' on tags at your community garden center, in garden catalogs, on plants available at the local big box stores, or on educational signage at your favorite public garden or park, because old habits are hard to break. In conclusion, and to answer the specific question posed in the title, the correct spelling of our highly popular mid-season blooming, violet red, evergreen azalea cultivar of Southern gardens is —'Formosum'.

## Notes and References

1. For our purposes this kingdom-to-species generalization is accurate, but this is not entirely correct, since you will run into still lower taxa like subspecies, form, and variety.
2. The title of the code is correct as shown. They don't capitalize algae, fungi, and plants in the title. The Melbourne Code was adopted by the Eighteenth International Botanical Congress. Melbourne, Australia. July 2011.
3. Brickell, C. D., et al. 2009. International Code of Nomenclature for Cultivated Plants, Proceedings of the meeting of the I.U.B.S. Commission for the Nomenclature of Cultivated Plants. Eighth Edition. Acta Horticulturae.
4. Leslie, A. C. (comp). 2004. International Rhododendron Register and Checklist (2nd ed.). London: Royal Horticultural Society. The ten IRRC



Supplements to the 2nd edition are available on the Internet in pdf format and can be searched using Adobe Acrobat Reader.

5. Leslie, A. C. "How Many Azalea Cultivars Have Been Named?" *The Azalean*. Fall 2014. 36 (3): 55.
6. I had to look it up myself. A dichlamydeous plant is one whose flower has both a calyx and a corolla. Azaleas and maples are examples. A monochlamydeous flower is one in which the perianth does not consist of a separate calyx and corolla, and mistletoe and fig are examples. An achlamydeous flower, which is said to be "naked," has neither a calyx nor a corolla, and willows and poplars are examples.
7. For more information on gender endings see Voss, D. H., "*Rhododendron indicum* and *Indicus*, -a, -um: A Slippery Slope." *The Azalean*, Summer 2007. 29(2): 28-29. See also Voss, D. H. "How Personal Names Become Epithets." *Journal American Rhododendron Society*. Fall 2011. 65(4): 193-194.
8. Stearn, W. T. 1986. *Botanical Latin*. 3rd Edition, revised. Devon, United Kingdom. David & Charles. 566 p.
9. Hereman, S. 1868. *Paxton's Botanical Dictionary*. London. Bradbury, Evans, & Co. 623 p.
10. Galle, F. C. 1987. *Azaleas*. Revised and Enlarged Edition. Timber Press.
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William C. Miller III is a recipient of the Brookside Gardens Chapter's Frederic P. Lee Commendation (1988), and is twice the recipient of the ASA's Distinguished Service Award (1995 and 2002). He was chairman of the ASA's Glenn Dale Preservation Project, and a co-chairman of Dick West's Ten Oaks Glenn Dale Project. He is past president of the Brookside Gardens Chapter, a former vice president of the ASA, a past member of the ASA board of directors, past co-chairman of the ASA's membership committee, past chairman of the ASA's public information committee, a long-time ASA member, and a frequent contributor to *The Azalean*.

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# Society News and Membership Renewals Due

By Paul Beck, Treasurer—Oak Hill, Virginia

## ASA Membership Renewal Reminder

By this time, you should have received either an email dues reminder or a paper reminder via USPS. Your annual dues need to be paid by the end of December if your membership expiration date (as printed on The Azalean wrapper above your address) is 2016. If you have not received a renewal notice, please contact me immediately so that I may determine the reason. Also, if you use email and received a paper reminder, please contact me to provide your email address to save the ASA money.

You may pay your dues by filling out the application on the wrapper and mailing to my address on the form with your check. You may also pay by credit card online by clicking on the **Join Us** link on the ASA website. Finally, if you want to pay by credit card, but do not wish to use PayPal, you may call me directly at 703-860-5676 and I will take your credit card over the phone.

By direction of the ASA board of directors, and in compliance with the by-laws, those members who have not renewed by the end of February will be moved to inactive status, and they will not receive The Azalean or be able to access the restricted areas of the website. Also, those renewing after this date will not receive missed issues of The Azalean.

Please note that dues for our Canadian and overseas members have increased this year, due to significantly higher mailing costs for those members. There is also a new **online-only membership** option available for those of you who do not wish to pay the higher dues.

This year, I have implemented a **subscription** option for paying your dues. To avail yourself of this feature, you must have a PayPal™ account. Once you sign up for the subscription, your PayPal™ account will be automatically billed yearly for your dues. If you do use this method of payment, please be sure to keep your PayPal™ account current with a valid bank account or credit card.

Also this year, I have added the ability for you to make donations to the ASA general or research funds. Monies donated to the **Research Fund** will go 100% toward supporting various research projects. Donations to the **General Fund** will support our continuing operations of the society, and will help to keep our dues where they are. Donations to both funds are fully tax-deductible.

## Update on Convention Plant Sale Automation

In the 2016 Fall issue of The Azalean, I offered the use of the automation software and hardware used at the Williamsburg convention to assist future convention plant sales. I am amending that offer to include a much simpler option if you do not wish to expend the effort to put individual tags on all plants and provide descriptions and pictures for the website. This option would have a price sheet with barcodes at the cashier's table, assuming that all plants

of the same size and type are priced the same. The cashier would then scan the sheet the appropriate number of times to record the sale. In this case, the printed receipt would list the generic plant size/type, not the specific cultivar and group as was done at Williamsburg.

## Update on Chapter 501(c)(3) Status

There has been an ongoing effort for the last year and a half to obtain 501(c)(3) status for all ASA chapters as subordinate organizations to the ASA. Having that status enables members or non-members and nurseries to donate plants and/or supplies to the chapter and gain an income tax exemption as a charitable organization donation. I will not go into the details, but the IRS has denied our application for a couple of administrative reasons. Since only a few chapters of the ASA wish to have 501(c)(3) status, and the application fee has been reduced to only \$275 per chapter, we have decided to cease pursuing a group exemption and leave it up to the chapters to decide if they wish to have this status. If your chapter contributed money to the group application, those funds will be returned by the end of November. If you do not receive your refund by then, please contact me immediately.

Please note that tax exempt status is not the same as 501(c)(3) status. Tax exempt status is gained by obtaining your own EIN and filing yearly 990-N "postcard" reports. If you have completed these two steps, and your annual gross receipts are below \$50,000, you are exempt from paying income tax. The 501(c)(3) status is obtained by filing a 1023-EZ IRS form, and paying the \$275 "user fee". This is a very brief and easily completed form. The Northern Virginia chapter received its 501(c)(3) status in less than one month using this method.

## The Azalean – Some Back Issues Available

Jim Thorton, while sorting through his collection of The Azalean noted that he had several duplicates. He is making the following copies available to anyone who would like to have them:

Summer 2004, 26(1) — 1 copy  
Winter 2008, 30(4) — 1 copy  
Spring 2009, 31(1) — 1 copy  
Summer 2009, 31(2) — 1 copy  
Winter 2009, 31(4) — 4 copies  
Fall 2010, 32(3) – 7 copies  
Winter 2010, 32(4) – 10 copies  
Summer 2011, 33(2) – 14 copies  
Fall 2011, 33(3) – 1 copy  
Winter 2012, 34(4) – 5 copies

Anyone wishing to obtain these copies from Jim, please contact him at his e-mail: [jimpatsy@comcast.net](mailto:jimpatsy@comcast.net)

# Chapter News

## Ben Morrison Chapter

*Budne Reinke—Chapter President*

Following up on the September meeting— Bob and Rosa McWhorter visited the Ben Morrison Memorial Garden in Pass Christian, MS, on the Pineville Presbyterian Church property. The garden consists of a collection of Back Acres Hybrids developed by Ben Morrison when he retired to MS. Some consider these hybrids Morrison's best work. The chapter sent cuttings to Drs. Wayne and Sylvia McLaurin to get the garden started. The McLaurins provide financing and maintain the garden. Chapter members approved sending \$300 to the church for upkeep of the garden and approved a donation to the USNA in memory of Don Voss. The chapter held a noon-time holiday celebration on Wednesday, November 30th, hosted by Bill and Gabrielle Scott, from Upper Marlboro, MD.

## NVA Chapter

*Barry Sperling—Corresponding Secretary*

Since our well-attended Cutting Exchange in July the Northern VA Chapter has held two more successful events.

September saw the annual auction and plant sale with many of the offerings cared for by Carolyn Beck and the computerized sales with bar codes and credit card acceptance engineered by her husband Paul Beck. His database automatically kept track of who-bought-what and how-many-of-each-plant there were. The auction was successful and will provide funds for our coming donations.

In October we were treated to a talk on the Web of Life in our soils, the importance of maintaining a complex biota of plants and animals which make available nutrients to the roots. Master Gardener Dr. Paulette Royt, currently volunteering at Green Spring Gardens, gave the talk in a clear and enjoyable manner that left us all with a deeper appreciation of the need to develop and care for the action beneath the greenery.

New members: Robin and Brent Baer, Oak Hill, VA and Helen Li, Falls Church, VA.

## Texas Chapter

*Sherrie Randall—Secretary*

The fall meeting was held at Robert Thau's home on September 24, with 13 members and one guest attending. New officers were elected: Harold Hall, president; Robert Thau, vice-president; Sherrie Randall, secretary; Don Parsons, treasurer. Robert demonstrated his methods and equipment for azalea propagation and his garden. (See related article on page 84.)

For the second year, we had a booth at the fall Nacogdoches Farmer's Market. Our chapter-grown azaleas were available, along with handouts on planting and growing tips. As we also consider this event a chance to introduce folks to the society, we were able to share past issues of *The Azalean* with them, thanks to those provided to us by Susan

Bauer at the Williamsburg convention. In March 2017, the chapter will be hosting a booth at the Jasper Azalea Festival, where we will again be selling azaleas and introducing folks to the society.

New member: Joyce Adams, Nacogdoches, TX.

## Vaseyi Chapter

*Audrey Stelloh—Past President*

In October we joined forces with the Southeastern Chapter of the American Rhododendron Society in a massive plant auction. About 45 people attended with most donating plants to the auction. Ray Head and Jackson McCarter purchased wholesale deciduous azaleas and rhododendrons to provide over 60 large plants to the sale. Doley Bell, Vaseyi treasurer, masterfully auctioned off over 150 plants. Leon Pace and John Kendall handed him plants lightning fast and Pamela McCarter miraculously kept track of all the purchases.

In November we had the annual Vaseyi BBQ and yummy pot luck supper. Jim Brant and his wife Pam drove all the way from coastal Virginia to present a slide show about the native azaleas of Hooper Bald, NC, where Jim has spearheaded efforts to remove encroaching vegetation from around the native azaleas. Although J Jackson was unable to attend, we used a photo of J and crowned him the new president of Vaseyi Chapter. Our Augie Kehr award for dedicated service to Vaseyi Chapter went to Secretary Suzanne Medd.



Photo Audrey Stelloh

▲ Audrey Stelloh presents the Kehr Memorial Award. Plaque inscription reads: Awarded to Suzanne Medd, for your distinguished contribution to furthering the knowledge of propagation, care and general appreciation of azaleas, and, in recognition of your outstanding participation in the activities of the Vaseyi Chapter. Presented with deep gratitude by the Vaseyi Chapter of the ASA during the fourteenth annual meeting of the Vaseyi Chapter in the county of Henderson the state of North Carolina, United States of America on the sixth day of November, two thousand and sixteen.

**Welcome new At-large Members:** Tony Baron, Gary Milliman, Dennis Triglia, all from Brookings, OR, and Mike Osbon, Tignall, GA.

# My Nursery and Gardens Help Grow Memberships

By Robert Thau—Jasper, Texas

I have worked with plants since I was a kid and always had a love for azaleas. So, after retiring in 2014, I decided to plant an azalea garden with azaleas and Japanese maples. I located azaleas throughout the US that I wanted. I was looking for rare plants that most people have never seen before. I now have over 100 varieties of Japanese maples and 400 varieties of azaleas. Just a few hybrid groups in my garden include Holly Springs, Bob Stewart, Nuccio, James Harris, and Sandra McDonald plus a large collection of Satsuki. I am also working with Buck Claggett's Bowie Mills Hybrids as part of the Legacy Project of the NVA Chapter, since their president Rick Bauer appointed me as an associate member on the project.

I do my own cutting propagation, with an 80% success rate, and want to pass on my experience so people don't make the same mistakes I made learning how to propagate.

The garden development includes a tract of a little over one-half acre, with trails and large beds roped off with wooden posts and rope. All the plants are marked with plastic stakes and the names written in permanent ink, using a Markal® K® Paintstik® marking pen from a local building supply outlet.

In 2015 I joined the Texas Chapter of the ASA. At the meetings I attended there was always talk about attracting new members. Here in Texas most people think the only azaleas that exist are in the Formosum group, because these are planted in most yards. I had an idea to offer tours of my garden to let people see what other azaleas are available.

I did not know where to start, but knew that Jasper, Texas, had a Master Gardening program and that they are always looking for places to visit. I knew a retired nursery owner who was an instructor for the Master Gardeners, so I hopped in my truck to visit him. I talked to him and his wife. When they heard my offer, they were so happy, especially since I wanted to introduce the public to azaleas that many people did not know existed. He directed me to the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service office to see a lady named Sharron who does the bookings for the class. She was so excited with my offer she called her boss, and we talked for a good while and set up a date for them for a tour of my nursery and garden. I was told that 16 members would attend, but 31 members came. As soon as the people started walking into the garden, the cameras were going off. I received many thanks from them and even received a thank you note from one member. It was a big success. I believe that two Master Gardeners have joined the ASA so far, and there should be more to come.

There was more I had to do, so I offered to do a free workshop on propagating azaleas for the same group. The date is set, and I've been told up to 80 members could attend.

Another source of potential members is the Boy Scouts. My neighbor's boss is a Scout leader. She talked with him about the idea, and he was interested. They are getting me

some information about whether the Scouts might have a merit badge dealing with growing and care of plants. Sharron from Texas AgriLife Extension also asked if I would be interested in doing a talk at our local school. I accepted, but this will most likely not take place until next year.

I had another lead to check with—the Jasper Chamber of Commerce—to let them know what I have and see what they could do to attract people to tour my garden. Since the Jasper-Lake Sam Rayburn Chamber of Commerce is sponsoring the 29th Annual Jasper Azalea Festival March 18, 2017, I persuaded the Texas Chapter of the ASA to have a booth to sell azaleas and pass out membership information.

My whole idea is to introduce the public to the many types and varieties of azaleas with hopes of attracting new members so our society will flourish. Each month at the Master Gardeners' meeting Sharron sets out ASA applications. She told me that the members are picking them up. In the future I am also planning to invite another group of Master Gardeners for a tour. I have a friend who is a member from a town about an hour away. I compiled a picture album of close-ups of all my azaleas so I can show pictures when the azaleas are not blooming.

I have dedicated myself to doing what I have to do to attract new members to keep this great society moving forward.

Robert Thau first became interested in plants as a teenager, and he still loves to watch plants grow. In the early 1980s when he lived in Moss Bluff, LA, he was co-owner of a retail nursery specializing in azaleas and camellias and owned a wholesale nursery that grew tropical bougainvilleas until they were lost during Hurricane Rita. He learned how to propagate at an early age, attended seminars held through the Texas Nursery and Landscape Association and the Louisiana Nursery and Landscape Association, learned from several propagators, and purchased many books. He is also an associate camellia judge for the American Camellia Society. His hobby nursery is called Nature's Way Gardens and Greenhouse. He can be reached at 409-489-8318 or at [rwubbathau@yahoo.com](mailto:rwubbathau@yahoo.com). Watch for garden photos in bloom time next spring.



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# Chronological List of Satsuki Articles in The Azalean

By Jim Trumbly—Roseville, California

[Jim Trumbly researched all the past articles in The Azalean to highlight those whose primary focus was Satsuki. This list not only shows the enduring interest in Satsuki azaleas, but it also shows a wide variation in nomenclature, which Jim also highlights in his notes on entries. Ed]

“An Encyclopedia of Satsuki Azaleas.” January 1980. 2(1): 7-8.

Member Jo Ann Ricchiuti reports on a three volume Japanese encyclopedia of Satsuki available from bookstore in Maryland. All information in Japanese, however, a translation of the Satsuki names is available. The Japanese name of the publication is not given in the report. [I know this to be *Satsuki Kantei Jiten*. 1975. Carolyn Beck has it and there is one at the University of Virginia library. It is from a different company/source than *Satsuki Jiten* that came later.]

“The Observations of B.Y. Morrison,” Hugh Caldwell. October 1980. 2 (4): 1-5.

General observations on azaleas but includes some discussion of Satsuki habit and hybridizing with Satsuki.

“Again, The Encyclopedia of Satsuki Azaleas.” October 1980. 2(4): 9.

Includes some corrections to the translation sheets, and name omissions that need translating. One 3-part name: ‘Aoi-no-hikari’.

“Satsuki Hybrids.” October 1980. 2(4): 9.

Report that a list of all Satsuki in U.S. is being prepared by George Harding and Ronnie Palmer.

“More Observations of B. Y. Morrison.” January 1981. 3(1): 1,4-5.

Mentions Satsuki sporting and Johga sports over several paragraphs.

“The Encyclopedia of Satsuki Azaleas.” January 1981. 3(1): 6-7.

Presents a list of corrections to the translation sheets of the Encyclopedia of Satsuki azaleas. The actual Japanese name of the publication is not given: see my comment previously about this. Three-part Satsuki name format: ‘Shuho No Hikari’.

“Some Thoughts on Satsukis,” Carl R. Hahn. July 1981. 3(3): 1,7-8.

Carl does not mention any three-part Satsuki names.

“The Origin of Satsukis: The Yakushima Connection,” Barry Yinger. July 1981. 3(3): 1, 4-7.

Barry does not mention any three-part Satsuki names.

“More Thoughts About Satsuki Azaleas,” George Harding. July 1981. 3(3): 2-4.

In-depth discussion of Satsuki and mention of over 80 cultivars. Also mentions *Satsuki Taikan*, the largest Satsuki compendium that I know of, and the name of the previously discussed encyclopedia of Satsuki as *Satsuki Kantei Jiten*, by Seiji Ishikawa, Chu Sushi and Tetsun Osuke Kurihara. George uses two conventions in three-part Satsuki names: ex. ‘FUJI NO MINE’ and ‘Kaho no hikari’.

“Satsuki Azaleas as Bonsai.” Jack C. Crowley. October 1981. 3(4):1,13-16, Supplement 1-3 after p. 16.

For three-part Satsuki names: Ex. ‘Yata-No-Kagami’.

“Correspondence of B. Y. Morrison.” January 1982. 4(1): 11-13.

Regarding three-part Satsuki names: Discussion of retirement and move to Mississippi, and two paragraph section on Satsuki including a mention that the Japanese were revising their transliterations (beginning of some standardization).

“Brookside Gardens Chapter Azalea Testing Program.” Ryon Page. December 1983. 4(5): 75-76.

For three-part Satsuki names: Ex. ‘Kaho-no-Hikari’.

“Satsuki Project: Brookside Gardens Satsuki Collection.” Ryon Page. June 1984. 6(2): 25.

“Brookside Gardens Satsuki Collection Cultivar Names.” Robert K. Barry. December 1984. 6(4): 57-59.

For three-part Satsuki names: Ex. ‘Kaho no Hikari’

“Pattern of Sporting.” Charles H. Evans and William C. Miller III. March 1985. 7(1): 1-2.



*Rhododendron occidentale*

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Discusses azaleas in general but with emphasis on Satsuki and a drawing sent to Dr. Ackerman at the Plant Introduction Station from Ben Morrison in 1965. Morrison's drawing of Satsuki flower patterns as they affect future flower patterns from ongoing branch development. It is essentially what my article says except from the clonal propagating perspective which is essentially the same thing. [See most recent citation at end of list.] Morrison understood this relationship of multi-patterned azaleas over 50 years ago, amazing! Morrison discusses a Satsuki he has labeled 'Kaghetsumuji'. This is now transliterated as 'Kagetsu' and the "muji" is the Japanese equivalent of "self". Thus when Morrison got a solid colored clone of something he added the word "muji" to the name. I do the exact same thing as I explained in my article except writing "self" although on some occasions I have written "muji" instead of "self."

"Late-Flowering Japanese Azaleas." B.Y. Morrison (reprint from Natl. Hort. Mag.). June 1985. 7(2): 33-34.

I haven't researched this old article to see if the exact same convention was used for the three-part words in the original. It is likely Bill Miller submitted this to The Azalean. For three-part Satsuki names: Ex. 'Shinnyo-no-tsuki'.

"Cultural Hints for Satsuki Azalea Bonsai." Douglas K.

Ruffner. June 1986. 8(2):39-40.

Douglas does not mention any three-part Satsuki names. "The Enchanting Satsuki –Part 1," Ajit K. Thakur, Ph.D. December 1989. 11(4):164-68.

For three-part Satsuki names: Ex. 'Shinnyo No Tsuki'. "The Enchanting Satsuki – Part 2," Ajit K. Thakur, Ph. D. March 1990. 12(1): 4-7, 15-16.

For three-part Satsuki names: Ex. 'Shinnyo No Tsuki'. "Named Satsuki Sports," Malcolm Clark. June 1990. 12(2): 28-29.

For three-part Satsuki names: Ex. 'Asahi no Izumi'. "What is a Satsuki," William C. Miller III. September 1990. 12(3):52-54.

For three-part Satsuki names: Ex. 'Tochi-no-hikari'. Also in quoting from a Japanese person for same cultivar, 'Tochi no Hikari'.

"What, Actually, are Gumpo and Satsuki Azaleas," Polly Hill. December 1998. 20(4):76.

For three-part Satsuki names, only mentions 'Kin-no-sai'.

"The Changing Fashion of Satsuki," and "Research Notes on Satsuki Dictionary." Jim Trumbly. Summer 2001. 23(2):28-42,43.

For three-part Satsuki names: Ex. 'Kirin-no-Kagami'. "Propagating Multi-Patterned Satsuki," Jim Trumbly. Summer 2016. 38(2): 28-30.

## Yes, You Can Write for The Azalean

The Azalean needs more good articles about azaleas, their care, and their use in the landscape. Example topics include:

- ◆ Articles about new public gardens or special azalea collections being created in your areas.
- ◆ Descriptions and photographs of ASA member gardens.
- ◆ Current research in azaleas being conducted at local universities, extension service gardens, or junior colleges.
- ◆ Information about azalea festivals and sales.
- ◆ Historic garden restoration stories.
- ◆ Articles about noteworthy azalea hybrid groups or new species or cultivar introductions.

**Format:** Send articles as Microsoft Word document attachments to [theazalean@gmail.com](mailto:theazalean@gmail.com)

**Illustrations:** Color or black-and-white print or digital photographs, or drawings can be used for illustrations. Provide captions and photographer or artist name.

**Deadlines:** Send finished copy and illustrations by the following dates to ensure careful review and production:

**Spring Issue—January 7**

**Summer Issue—April 15**

**Fall Issue—August 1**

# **Azaleas 2017 – Down on the Bayou**

## **Thursday March 30 – Saturday April 1**

### **Hammond, Louisiana**

#### *Host Hotel*

Courtyard by Marriott, 1605 South Magnolia Street, Hammond, LA 70403  
\$109 group rate; Phone 985.956.7730

#### Thursday March 30th

Registration at Host Hotel (1-4 pm)

Board of Directors Meeting – Courtyard Marriott Board Room (2-4 pm)

Social, Dinner and Plant Sale – LSU AgCenter Hammond Research Station (5-8 pm)

#### Friday March 31<sup>st</sup>

Breakfast On Your Own at Hotel or Elsewhere (prior to 8 am)

Tour to St. Francisville (home of the Audubon Pilgrimage) (8 am until 3 pm)

Imahara's Botanical Gardens

Rosedown Plantation State Historic Site (lunch)

Buses Return to Hotel in Hammond (approximately 4:45 pm)

Evening Dinner – LSU AgCenter Hammond Research Station (6-8:30 pm)

*Speakers – Rodrigo Valverde, LSU AgCenter Plant Pathologist*

*Mark Windham, University of Tennessee Plant Pathologist*

*Neil Odenwald, Fellow, American Society of Landscape Architects*

Plant Sale Concludes – LSU AgCenter Hammond Research Station (6-8:30 pm)

#### Saturday April 1<sup>st</sup>

Breakfast On Your Own at Hotel or Elsewhere (prior to 8 am)

Tour to Local Nurseries (8 am until 4 pm)

Transcend Nursery, Independence – Buddy and Dixie Lee

Bracy's Nursery, Wilmer – Randy and Regina Bracy (lunch)

Plant Show and Tell with Margie Jenkins, Amite

Dessert at Margie Jenkins', Amite

Buses Return to Hotel in Hammond (approximately 4:45 pm)

Evening Awards Banquet – The Mezzanine Event Hall, 308 S. Cate Street, Hammond (6-9 pm)

*Entertainment by illusionist David Himelrick*

*Flying – Baton Rouge Metropolitan Airport (52 miles) or New Orleans International Airport (48 miles)*



# 2017 ASA Convention

## Azaleas—Down on the Bayou

By *Allen Owings—Hammond, Louisiana*

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The Louisiana Chapter of the Azalea Society of America is looking forward to hosting the national convention in 2017 – “**Down On the Bayou.**” We will be headquartered in Hammond, LA – the Heart of the Florida Parishes. Hammond is located one hour east of Baton Rouge and one hour north of New Orleans. Peak azalea bloom in the Florida Parishes area is typically late March. Early blooms can begin in mid-February, and there is typically azalea flower color through early May before transition begins to the summer- and fall-flowering repeat bloomers.

We will have a great time in the area with tours to historical St. Francisville, stops at local nurseries and several evenings for garden touring, plant buying, dining and socializing at the **LSU AgCenter Hammond Research Station**, home to the Margie Jenkins Azalea Garden.

### Our Host Hotel

Our host hotel is the Courtyard by Marriott in Hammond located at 1605 South Magnolia Street. The hotel is convenient to many local dining options and a mile south of downtown Hammond. This is a new hotel facility – opening in 2016. Our board meeting will be held at the hotel in their board meeting room on Thursday afternoon. Early arrivers can pick up their registration at the hotel on Thursday afternoon. The group rate is \$109/night (deadline March 15, 2017). Call 985-956-7730 for reservations. [www.marriott.com/hotels/travel/hdccc-courtyard-hammond](http://www.marriott.com/hotels/travel/hdccc-courtyard-hammond). Breakfast in the mornings is “on your own” at the hotel.

### Plant Sales, Dinners, and Evening Socials

Our plant sale, Thursday and Friday evening dinners and social times will be spent 5 miles from downtown Hammond at the LSU AgCenter Hammond Research Station located at 21549 Old Covington Highway.

The plant sale will be held on Thursday and Friday evenings while we are at the Hammond Research Station. Plants available will be a selection of plants from the Southern Living® Plant Collection, possible plants from Griffith Propagation Nursery in Georgia, and plants grown or collected at the station, and from local Louisiana growers and plant enthusiasts. Plants will not be for sale on Saturday, so buy early and buy often!

The Hammond Research Station was established as the Fruit and Truck Experiment Station in January 1922 to provide research for strawberry and truck-crop farmers. The Tangipahoa Parish Police Jury purchased the land from Ivy Byron Bankston at the request of the Hammond Chamber of Commerce. A tax (levied in two wards of Tangipahoa Parish specifically for the establishment of an agricultural experiment station) provided funds to purchase the land, which was then leased to Louisiana State University. This

station was the fourth to be established in Louisiana. The station consists of 140 acres.

In 1922, Boleslaus “Bill” Szymoniak was appointed superintendent and began the first research projects on strawberries and truck crops. Walter F. “Hody” Wilson Jr. was named superintendent in 1936 and remained in this position until 1975. Wilson’s primary interest was camellias, and he was responsible for the extensive plantings on the station. Dr. Bunnie W. Wascom was named superintendent in July 1975, and chemical weed control and turfgrass studies were added to the research program.

Dr. Roysell J. Constantin was appointed resident coordinator in August 1980. In 1983 the station became known as the Hammond Research Station and in 2001 became part of the AgCenter’s Southeast Region.

Dr. Regina Bracy became resident coordinator in 2004. Under Dr. Bracy’s direction, a new program, the Landscape Horticulture Research and Extension Center, was initiated to serve the nursery and landscape industry.

Dr. Allen Owings assumed the leadership of the station in the spring of 2016. In a few years, the station has become a dynamic site for landscape horticulture research and extension programs.

The Hammond Research Station is home to bedding plant trials, the Margie Jenkins Azalea Garden, the Hody Wilson Camellia Garden, a Piney Woods Garden, the largest evaluation of new crape myrtles in the southern United States, plant growth regulator research trials, and pest management studies on chilli thrips, crape myrtle bark scale and much more.

Bantaa’s Catering from Hammond will be providing a four-item entrée buffet on Thursday and Friday evenings at the station.

### St. Francisville Tour – Friday, March 30

**Imahara’s Botanical Garden** in St. Francisville is a privately owned garden developed and maintained by Baton Rouge area horticulture legend Walter Imahara. In 2003, Imahara purchased 55 acres along the backwash banks of the Mississippi River, located one mile from the historic town. He had a dream to plant a beautiful garden much like the one he spent his childhood years in, the historic Afton Villa Gardens. Azaleas and majestic live oaks, magnolias and reflecting ponds became the images from which a “legacy garden” would be built, a gift from him and his wife to be enjoyed by all. <http://imaharasbotanicalgarden.blogspot.com/>

We will also journey to the home and grounds at the historical **Rosedown Plantation** for a tour led by horticulturist Trish Aleshire. Now part of the Louisiana State Parks, staff and volunteers work to conserve and maintain the





▲ Buddy Lee has a wealth of new plants in a new arboretum at new piece of property near Loranger, LA.



▲ Margie Jenkins is looking forward to seeing everyone at her place during the 2017 convention.

▼ Dr. Neil Odenwald, Fellow, ASLA, featured Friday night speaker.



and disease-tolerant Rhododendron studies, new breeding efforts with Louisiana’s native shrubs and more. Also hear Dr. John Thornton share his 45 years of Rhododendron breeding knowledge.

Lunchtime on Friday will be spent at **Bracy’s Nursery** and the beautiful home and outdoor living area of hosts Randy and Regina Bracy. Bracy’s Nursery started in mid-1980s and is now one of the largest wholesale production nurseries in Louisiana. Enjoy both food and plants. [www.bracys.com](http://www.bracys.com)

A stop at the nursery of legendary nurserywoman **Margie Jenkins** will conclude the afternoon of nursery visits. Margie will highlight some of her favorite plants and favorite azaleas in a “show and tell” presentation. This is not to be missed, and includes a dessert buffet. (Keep in mind—in Louisiana, we eat at every stop, so please pace yourself!)

## Speakers - Friday Night

**Dr. Neil G. Odenwald** will share with all of us his love of historical Louisiana gardens, gardeners, landscaping, and design. He was a professor and director of the LSU Robert Reich School of Landscape Architecture. Through his love of plant materials and planting design, Odenwald has made a significant impact on the people and gardens in the South. With a Master’s of Landscape Architecture from LSU and a PhD in Horticulture from Mississippi State University, Odenwald has a wealth of knowledge and understanding of all aspects of the garden. During his tenure as a professor and director of the LSU Robert Reich School of Landscape Architecture, Odenwald encouraged students to explore landscapes through travel in addition to using resources in their own backyard, such as Hilltop Arboretum.

Odenwald has written many books and coauthored, with James Turner, *Identification, Selection & Use of Southern Plants*, a staple in every gardener’s library. His hands have also been “in the dirt” at Rosedown Gardens, Afton Villa Gardens, Melrose Plantation, Longue Vue Garden, and New Orleans City Park. In addition, he has spoken at garden symposia and garden club meetings across the country.

site, conducting tours and programs to illustrate plantation life in the 1800s. In 2005, Rosedown Plantation was placed on the National Listing of Historic Landmarks. The gardens were the province of Martha Turnbull throughout her life. The Turnbells’ honeymoon in Europe included great formal gardens of France and Italy, an influence seen in Martha’s activities at Rosedown. The gardens grew out from the house over a span of many decades to cover approximately 28 acres. In the 19th century, Rosedown was one of the few privately maintained formal gardens in the United States.

[www.crt.state.la.us/louisiana-state-parks/historic-sites/rosedown-plantation-state-historic-site/index](http://www.crt.state.la.us/louisiana-state-parks/historic-sites/rosedown-plantation-state-historic-site/index)

## Nursery Tours – Saturday, March 31

We have been to **Transcend Nursery**, home of Buddy and Dixie Lee, during previous ASA national conventions in Louisiana. Join us again for their Southern hospitality and get to see Buddy’s current breeding and plant development efforts. Also, for the first time, the ASA group will venture to Buddy’s new arboretum a few miles up the road. See heat-



▲ Margie Jenkins and guest speaker, Dr. Mark Windham from UT Knoxville.



▲ LSU AgCenter professor and illusionist David Himelrick is featured at the Saturday night banquet.

Currently, the Robert Reich School of Landscape Architecture has raised funds to endow the Neil G. Odenwald Distinguished Professorship, which will be used to recruit and retain outstanding faculty at the school. In honoring and continuing Odenwald’s teachings, the professorship is focused on instruction in plant materials, planting design, and horticultural topics, ensuring these subjects continue to have a prominent place in the landscape architecture curriculum.

Plant pathologist **Dr. Mark Windham** from the University of Tennessee will present “Growing Disease Free Azaleas.” Dr. Windham earned a Ph.D. from North Carolina State. He has responsibility for research on diseases of ornamental plants at the Tennessee Agricultural Experiment Station. His research career has involved mildew resistant dogwoods and serving as chair of the Dogwood Research Team. At UT Knoxville, he teaches classes on plant pathology, diseases and insects of ornamental plants, and plant pathogenic fungi. He is also an expert historian of the Southeastern Conference.

**Dr. Rodrigo Valverde** will present “Virus Identification in Azaleas.” Dr. Valverde is a graduate of the University of Arkansas. As a plant pathologist with the LSU AgCenter, his main job responsibility is the development of a research program addressing diseases caused by viruses in Louisiana crops. Other duties include teaching a graduate course and a laboratory on plant virology, directing graduate student

research, and working with extension personnel on the diagnosis of viral diseases. The ASA Research Foundation Committee has funded his work with identification of viruses in Southern Indica azaleas.

## Annual Meeting, Banquet, Entertainment – Saturday Evening

To wrap up the convention, join us at the Mezzanine Event Hall, 308 South Cate Street in Hammond, for our awards banquet and entertainment. We hope to also have a preview of our planned ASA convention in Little Rock, Arkansas, in 2018.

Our dinner entertainment will be an encore presentation by **David Himelrick**, horticulture professor at LSU AgCenter. He will perform “Illusions of the Mind.” What our brain “sees” is influenced by our past experiences, imagination, and associations. He will keep you guessing as he uses the power of imagination to draw an image that exists only in someone’s mind! See more at [www.davidhimelrick.com](http://www.davidhimelrick.com)

Allen Owings is a horticulture professor at the LSU AgCenter Hammond Research Station. He directs activities at the station with a focus on research and outreach for the commercial ornamental horticulture industry. He is a life member of the Azalea Society of America and is the current president of the Louisiana Chapter.



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# Tyler Named USA Garden Destination of the Year

By *Holli Fourniquet*—Tyler, Texas

The Luxury Travel Guide magazine has named Tyler, TX, the “Garden Destination of the Year–USA” for 2016. The Luxury Travel Guide Awards represent the pinnacle of travel and tourism achievement. Tyler is known for its beautiful gardens including the ever so popular Azalea Trails that are frequented by thousands of visitors each year.

“A reader nominated Tyler based on the beauty of the Azalea Trail and rose gardens,” Susan Travis, Visit Tyler Vice President of Tourism & Servicing and Azalea Society of America TX Chapter member said. “From there, I submitted information and photos about the Azalea Trail to the judges to convince them Tyler deserved the award, and we won!”

The Tyler Azalea & Spring Flower Trail will be celebrating its 58th year next spring March 24–April 9, 2017. Visitors are invited to stroll along the Trail filled with beautiful azaleas and spring flowers as well as to enjoy local events during these three weekends. Tyler was made an ASA Azalea City in 2007 during the national ASA convention. Susan Travis also helped develop that application.

“It’s a huge honor to receive this designation from The Luxury Travel Guide,” Travis said. “We were in the running with several cities nationwide, but Tyler was able to rise above the other cities being considered.”

According to The Luxury Travel Guide, this year there was an unprecedented number of nominations, providing strong competition in every category. All winners of awards are subject to the same rigorous assessment criteria, carried out by the magazine’s in-house professionals. This ensures only the most deserving organizations and individuals walk away with one of these prestigious accolades. The team of experts travels the globe extensively in order to identify the very best hotels, airlines, and tour operators and highlights the best destinations and attractions.

Each winner is recognized in a special edition of the magazine: The Awards Winners’ Guide, which is distributed to more than 500,000 professional and affluent people worldwide. The guide is also found in airport lounges worldwide, as well as on cruise ships.

“Winning this award will bring a great amount of exposure to the Tyler area,” Shari Lee, Visit Tyler Vice President/General Manager of Conventions said. “We hope this will attract visitors who might have never heard of Tyler before now.”

For a full list of awards visit [www.corporativewire.com/luxury](http://www.corporativewire.com/luxury). For more information about the Tyler Azalea & Spring Flower Trail go to [www.visitt Tyler.com/azaleatrail](http://www.visitt Tyler.com/azaleatrail).

Holli Fourniquet is Assistant Vice President, Marketing, for Visit Tyler Texas, the city’s convention and visitor’s bureau. Susan Travis has been a TX Chapter ASA member since 2010. We hope that this award will also attract more members to the ASA.



Photo Visit Tyler

▲ Guy and Joan Pyron open their garden each year to visitors during the Tyler Azalea & Spring Flower Trail. It is one of the most popular gardens for photos.

▼ Thousands visit the Tyler Azalea & Spring Flower Trail each year to see splendid residential gardens.



Photo Jim Grantham

► Susan Travis, Visit Tyler Vice President of Tourism & Servicing and ASA member, is responsible for organizing the Tyler Azalea & Spring Flower Trail and played a huge role in helping Tyler win this national award.



Photo Visit Tyler

# Stalking Wild Azalea Mutants in Georgia and Alabama

By Dayton Wilde and Jim Gegogine—Athens, Georgia

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The diversity we see in azaleas results from variation in genes and genomes. Mutation, hybridization, and multiplication of azalea genomes have produced variation in gene sequences, gene combinations, and gene regulation. In the wild, such as it is, there is selection for genetic variation that increases the viability of a plant and its progeny. Genetic mutations that cause changes that are disadvantageous in nature can be maintained if they are compensated by a good copy of the gene. It is these recessive genes that interest us because of their potential to develop ornamental traits in azaleas that would rarely be found in the wild.

Recessive genes have been used to develop ornamental traits for centuries, although not deliberately. Repetitive flowering in modern roses is due to a knockout mutation that was present in Chinese cultivars around 1000 AD and bred into European roses 800 years later.<sup>1</sup> Double-flowered morning glories cultivated in 18th century Japan were the result of a mutation in a gene, *agamous*, that regulates flower development.<sup>2</sup> When neither copy of *agamous* is functional, stamens are converted to petals. *Agamous* mutations have also been found to be responsible for double-flowers in modern cultivars of ornamental cherry, gentian, and rue anemone.<sup>3-5</sup> Due to the loss of functional stamens, double-flowering is an example of a trait of ornamental interest that would seldom be observed in the wild. A recessive *agamous* mutation could be present in plants that appear normal, though. We are interested in looking for variant copies of genes leading to architectural traits (dwarfing, for example) that would be rarely seen in azaleas growing naturally.

To search for natural mutations in native azaleas, a genetically diverse population of plants is needed. An advantage of working with native species is that, by definition, we are at the center of their diversity. *Rhododendron canescens*, or Piedmont azalea, seemed like a reasonable species to start with. It is the most common native azalea in the South, which makes finding a large number of plants easier. Piedmont azalea was found to have a high level of genetic variation, due in part to introgression from other native azalea species.<sup>6</sup> It is the first native azalea to bloom in many areas and is important to native pollinators in early spring. It is hardy, exhibits lace bug resistance,<sup>7</sup> and is used in the horticultural trade. We wanted to screen Piedmont azaleas for natural mutations in key genes of plant architecture, particularly height and branching.

How many Piedmont azalea plants need to be screened to identify functional mutations? This depends on the genetic diversity of the collection, the number of genes being examined, and how lucky you are. We have screened for natural mutations in blueberry, a relative of azalea in the *Ericaceae*. We were looking for variation in *TFL1*, the gene whose mutation causes repetitive flowering in roses

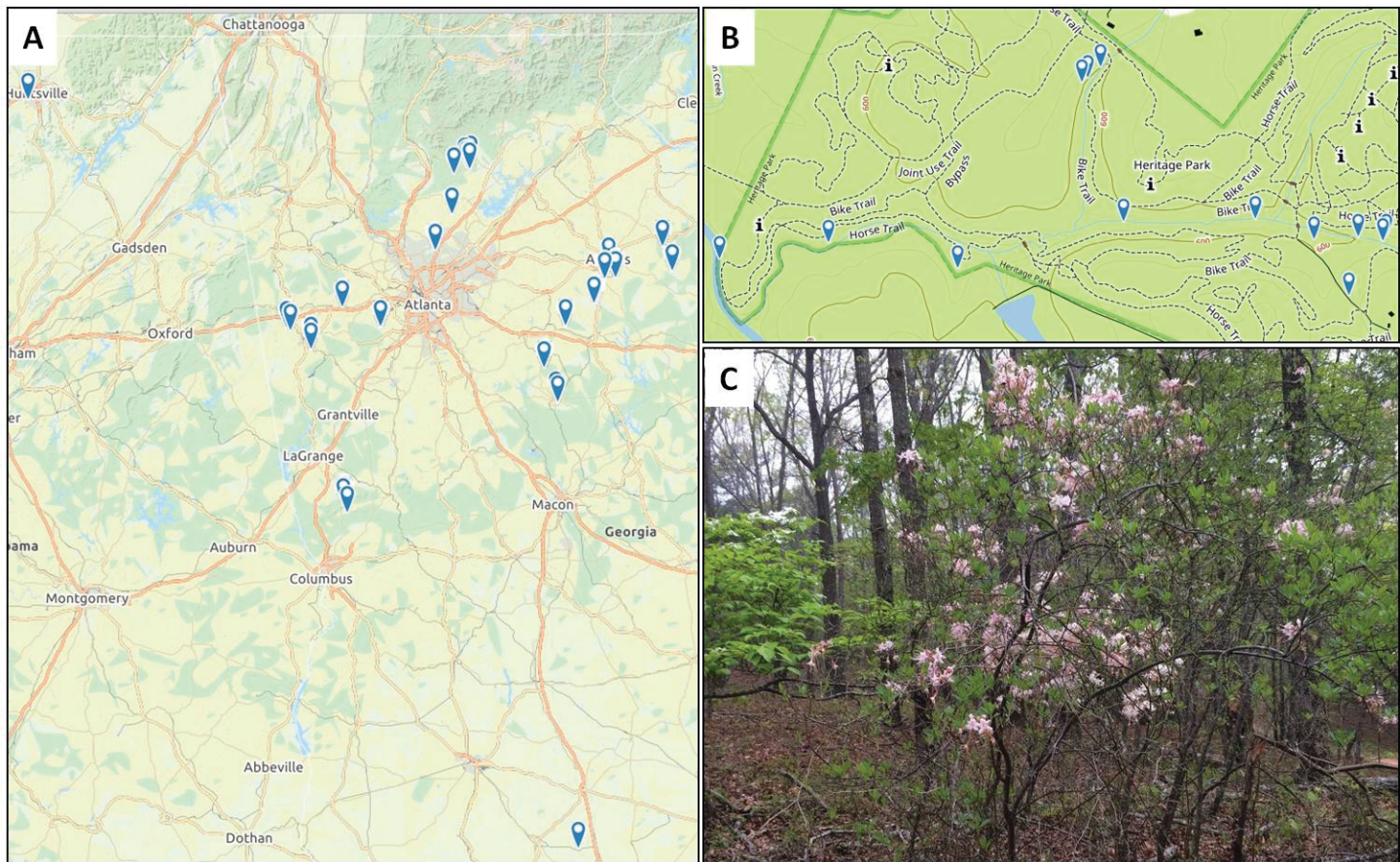
(and other plants). We examined 160 blueberry lines from the USDA germplasm collection and detected one line with a defective *TFL1* allele.<sup>8</sup> Screens of germplasm collections have identified gene mutations for agronomic traits in rapeseed (117 lines), corn (175 lines), chickpea (192 lines), barley (210 lines), sugar beet (268 lines), and rice (392 lines), among others.<sup>9</sup> For Piedmont azalea, our goal was to obtain material from 200-300 plants from diverse locations.

With the help of botanical societies, state and county agencies, and numerous individuals, we obtained leaf samples from 290 Piedmont azaleas in the spring of 2016. Most of these young leaves were collected across Georgia and kept cool until frozen and stored at -80o Celsius. Some Piedmont azalea samples were collected by collaborators and preserved by desiccation with silica gel.<sup>10</sup> The GPS location, flowering date, altitude, and photographs were recorded for most plants using a cell phone with a Gaia GPS mapping app.<sup>11</sup> The origin of a few azaleas that had been transplanted is unknown.

A map of the sample locations was developed using Gaia GPS tools. Figure A shows the location of the collection sites in Georgia and Alabama. Within each site, the location of a sampled plant is marked on the map with a pin (Fig. B). Leaves from up to 15 plants were collected per sampling site. Most plants were located in moist areas along creeks, although some were found in drier, upland environments (Fig. C). If genetic analysis identifies an azalea with a mutation, GPS coordinates and photographs should allow us to return to that plant.

Once all of the leaf samples were collected, DNA was isolated. Frozen leaves were ground in a bead mill, in which plastic tubes containing metal beads and the samples were shaken at very high speed (30 oscillations/second). DNA was purified from the powdered tissue with a commercial kit (DNeasy) that had been used to isolate DNA from silica-dried leaves of *Rhododendron aganniphum* and *R. phaeochrysum*.<sup>10</sup> The purity and concentration of the DNA was determined and the samples were stored at -20o C.

The development of the Piedmont azalea collection was funded by the ASA Azalea Research Foundation Committee and this collection was a major factor in acquiring further support to examine variation in genes controlling architectural traits. Through a Specialty Crop Block Grant from Georgia Department of Agriculture, we will screen the collection for mutations in key genes controlling height and branching patterns. Samples of Piedmont azalea DNA will be examined by the same techniques used to screen for disease-causing mutations in human genes.<sup>12</sup> The plant genes of interest are ones whose mutations have been important in the domestication of several crop species. We will look at genes that are normally responsible for making the hormone



▲ Piedmont azalea collection. (A) Collection sites in Georgia and Alabama. (B) Location of plants within a collection site. (C) Photograph linked to GPS coordinates of a sampled plant.

Photo and maps by Dayton Wilde

gibberellin, controlling axillary bud growth, and repressing the initiation of flowering. Mutations in these genes have led to semi-dwarfism, increased branching, and continuous flowering, respectively. We will determine the frequency of variation in these domestication genes. If Piedmont azaleas are found with mutations affecting gene function, the plants will be brought into an azalea breeding program at the University of Georgia.

The Piedmont azalea collection could also be used to better understand *R. canescens* as a species. Previous research identified AFLP markers that could detect genetic variation within and among seven species of the *Rhododendron* section *Pentanthera*, including *R. canescens*.<sup>6</sup> These markers can be used to examine the genetic composition of the *R. canescens* population and how it is influenced by introgression from other species. Markers may also be used to investigate genetic differences related to morphological variation found within *R. canescens*, such as the presence of glandular hairs. Genetic variation in this azalea collection could be of both horticultural and scientific value.

This project would not have been possible without the assistance of the Azalea Society of America, the Azalea Chapter of the American Rhododendron Society, the West Georgia Chapter of the Georgia Native Plant Society, the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, and the Athens-Clarke County Leisure Services Department. In particular, we would like to thank the following people for helping with sample collection: Charles Andrews, Robert Barr, Dale

Brooks, Vernon Bush, Betty Esco, Will Ferrell, John French, John Jensen, Lisa Kruse, Mitch Mortvedt, Jim Ozier, Cliff Perkins, Mike Strickland, Susan Wilde, and Pandora Williams.

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Dayton Wilde is a professor and Jim Gegogaine is a research technician in the Horticulture Department of the University of Georgia. A major interest of our lab is the application of genetics to streamline the development of ornamental traits, particularly in native plants.

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# SPOTLIGHT on CHAPTERS



Photo Barry Spertling

▲ NVA—Dr. Paulette Royt, speaker on the “Web of Life” in soils at the Oct. 23 meeting, pictured with Dave Nanney and Rick Bauer.

Photo Mary Beth Hagood



▼ TX Chapter members met September 24 at Robert Thau's nursery and gardens.



▲ TX Chapter leadership team set up the plant sale early Oct. 29. Shown in front the special TX Chapter banner and wearing their new chapter tee-shirts are Caryl Hall, new president Harold Hall, and new vice-president Robert Thau. The other early-organizer was secretary Sherrie Randall, who took this photo.

Photo Jackson McCarter



▼ Vaseyi Chapter's October plant sale was very successful, thanks to auctioneers Leon Pace (l) and Doley Bell (r). This joint venture with the Southeastern Chapter of the ARS attracted 45 attendees.