

The Azalean

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Journal of the Azalea Society of America



# President's Letter

Rick Bauer—Yorktown, Virginia

As I write this message, we are still in the middle of winter. Some of my winter plants such as hellebores are blooming, but most are still in their winter hibernation. The buds on my camellias and azaleas are a harbinger of a colorful spring around the corner. Spring is when our gardens come back to life and when our society enters prime time.

By the time you read this message, the convention in Charleston will likely be a pleasant memory. I always enjoy our conventions, not only because we visit some beautiful gardens, but it gives us a chance to link up with friends, many of whom we see only once a year. I thank Tom Johnson, the Rev. John Drayton Chapter, and the rest of the team for the work they put into planning and executing the convention.

In 2019 I look forward to the society building on the successes of 2018. Our two Azalea Cities designated last year are continuing their promotion of azaleas, with both cities holding azalea festivals this year. The fall edition of *The Azalean* had an article on the historic Azalea Trail in Lafayette, Louisiana. The folks in Lafayette are interested in working with the society to continue the promotion of azaleas. Work continues to preserve the native azaleas on Hooper Bald near Robbinsville, NC. The Northern Virginia Chapter continues to work with Norfolk Botanical Garden to expand their Glenn Dale collection and will plant Klimavicz hybrids in a Legacy Garden at Meadowlark Gardens in Vienna, Virginia this spring. There are other initiatives throughout the society promoting azaleas through collaboration with public gardens, nurseries, Master Gardeners and other horticultural organizations, and city officials. I hope to be reporting on them later in the year. I encourage our chapters to explore collaborative efforts to further the promotion of azaleas.

Our society members have a wealth of knowledge. I encourage you to share your knowledge with the rest of the members of the society through your chapter newsletters and by writing articles for publication in *The Azalean*. Articles can cover a broad range of topics, especially as they relate to azaleas in some manner. If you have any questions about writing and submitting articles, please contact our editor, Barbara Stump at [theazalean@gmail.com](mailto:theazalean@gmail.com). We have also enhanced *The Azalean* by now printing it in full color. I personally think it improves the experience of reading our journal and hope you agree.

Finally, I encourage you to get involved in the Legacy Project, either as a Legacy Lead or as a contributor to a Legacy Team. This project provides an excellent means of retaining documentation and historical information on hybrids and their hybridizers. It is also a way to ensure the perpetuation and propagation of true copies of the cultivars. The project can also provide a structure for interesting chapter programs. As I write this message, we currently have 16 hybrid groups in the project, and I expect additional hybrids to be added this year. Guidelines for the project are on the society website. If you have any questions about the project (or any other aspect of the society), contact me at [president@azaleas.org](mailto:president@azaleas.org).

## Request for Can Can Chorus Cuttings

Sandra McDonald created a series of hybrid azaleas developed from florist azaleas in the 1970s. They are listed in Galle on page 276 (in the 1987 edition). I have copies of 'Mademoiselle Gigi' and 'Mademoiselle Yvette'. If anyone has copies of the following varieties and can provide cuttings, please contact me at [president@azaleas.org](mailto:president@azaleas.org).

'Mademoiselle Amy'  
'Mademoiselle Charlene'  
'Mademoiselle Margot'

'Mademoiselle Bridgette'  
'Mademoiselle Lisette'  
'Mademoiselle Nanette'



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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### At-Large Contact

Robert Thau

Regular membership is open to all interested parties for an annual amount of \$30; life-membership for one or two persons at the same address is \$600. Members receive *The Azalean* and are eligible for participation in all activities of the Society. For information and a membership application, write to Leslie Nanney, Secretary, 8646 Tuttle Road, Springfield, VA 22152 or visit [www.azaleas.org](http://www.azaleas.org).

# The Azalean

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### On the Cover

The native plumleaf azalea *Rhododendron prunifolium* is typically described as being red, as shown here in a photo from Providence Canyon by Charlie Andrews. However, the color can vary year to year in the wild and in cultivation, according to him. (See a few examples of this species on p. 5, 7 of Ken Gohring's article.) Research could yield some insights into what causes this variation and might assist breeders in developing new cultivars.



# Plumleaf Azalea—*Rhododendron prunifolium*

By Ken Gohring—Marietta, Georgia

*Rhododendron prunifolium*, recognized as our rarest native azalea, is an attractive accent plant and a desirable addition to a native garden. The qualities of this species which endear it to many gardeners are numerous. Primary are its attractive blooms and the time of year that they appear. It is a true southern native found naturally only in Georgia and Alabama.

To get a better understanding of the natural growth habits of *R. prunifolium*, discussions were held with native azalea authorities Danny Hall, Steve Yeatts, and Ron Miller, who have extensive experience exploring the South for native plants. These three have found populations of *R. prunifolium* in various areas. They indicate that the species is found in areas near streams or lakes. In many cases the species is located up to 20 feet from moist areas, but Ron is familiar with one population that drapes over water, not unlike *R. arborescens* in low altitude sites.

## Prime Natural Areas

The prime location for natural populations is the Lake Eufaula area of Alabama. Lake Eufaula or Walter F. George Lake to Georgians (who will tell you that Lake Eufaula is in Oklahoma) is formed by the Walter F. George Lock and Dam, which spans the Chattahoochee River near Fort Gaines, Georgia, some 70 miles south of Columbus, Georgia. The lake covers some 45,000 acres and has 640 miles of shoreline. The Alabama city of Eufaula, with a population of some 13,000 citizens, is located on the lake. Maps of the lake reveal the feeder streams that flow into the lake. [See Map.] There appear to be more such drainages on the Alabama side of the lake, likely a factor in the trio of

azalea experts designating the Alabama side of the lake as a prime area for *R. prunifolium*.

Many of the drainage areas near the lake have populations of the plumleaf azalea. Ron, who makes extensive use of a boat in his explorations, indicates he has found many drainages into Lake Eufaula that have populations of *R. prunifolium*. Danny and Steve, exploration partners, usually drive country roads in their explorations. Upon reaching bridges and culverts they explore the areas adjacent to the wet areas. Over the years they have found many locations of the species. Internet sources indicate 40 to 50 known natural sites. Ron Miller's experience would indicate that there are many more. He shared a file that can be input into the Google Earth computer program system. This file shows locations where he has found *R. prunifolium*. This file is an amazing tool. The system allows the user to zoom in and magnify the locations where the azaleas were found and show the nature of the environment around the site. In the sites examined, many of the *R. prunifolium* designated populations were located in areas relatively close to the Chattahoochee River. In some cases the sites are located some distance from Lake Eufaula or the Chattahoochee River, likely discovered with the same methods used by Steve and Danny. The Google Earth system clearly shows the vegetation along these drainages. In several cases the sites were located near boat docks on Lake Eufaula. Ron indicates that many times the areas along the lake were difficult to explore and appeared to be snake havens. In his well-known paper about his 1951 historic exploration for native azaleas, Henry Skinner reports a similar experience with snakes at *R. prunifolium* sites.<sup>1</sup>

## Hybridization

The three explorers were quizzed concerning the characteristics of the plants they found. Steve indicates that in his experience there was not much evidence of cross pollination with any other species. On the other hand, Ron found some evidence of hybridization with other species. The late bloom practice of *R. prunifolium* limits its likelihood of cross pollination. The most likely candidates are the late-blooming *R. arborescens* var. *georgiana* and *R. viscosum*, the highly variable species in both form and bloom time. Ron doubts the occurrence of *R. arborescens* south of the fall line. The fall line is the geographical location where the hard rocks of the Piedmont meet the sands and gravels of the Coastal Plain. In Georgia the fall line stretches from Augusta south and west to Macon and on to Columbus. In Alabama the fall line extends along a curve from near Opelika to north of Montgomery north and west into Mississippi near Tusculumbia. Skinner relates that on his trip to find *R. prunifolium* in southwest Georgia he looked for *R. arborescens* at the southern-most part of its range in Upson County, Georgia.<sup>2</sup> Upson County is located north of the Georgia fall line. The time of his trip was July 12. He located them in "splendid quantity" in full bloom. Ron Miller's file

▼ Map—Heart of Prunifolium Territory.



Courtesy Charles Andrews

of *R. prunifolium* sites shows several north of the fall line suggesting that there is a possibility of cross pollination with the local *R. arborescens*. The *serrulatum* variety of *R. viscosum* is found in several southern Georgia counties, and it is possible that some of these locations are close enough and the bloom late enough that cross pollination with *R. prunifolium* does occur.

### Variation

There are other possibilities for variation in color. The vast majority of references regarding the color of *R. prunifolium* blooms describe them as orange, orange-red, or red. Color variation occurs in several native azalea species, and it is certainly possible that the conditions that cause this are also present in *R. prunifolium*. An interesting aside in Ron's conversation is his experience in observing bloom time of azaleas. He has experienced forms of *R. alabamense* that bloom in July, some two months later than most of this species. He did not indicate that these were likely hybridizing with *R. prunifolium*, as he indicated that their natural locale was farther north of the known *R. prunifolium* sites. [See Photos 1-4.]

### Survivability of Natural Populations

The three experts were questioned concerning the likelihood that natural populations of the species would be lost by expanding commercial or residential development. They indicate that this was not likely because of the areas where the populations are found. Most of the sites were in areas not suitable for construction. Steve did indicate that possibly timber operations could be a problem. The state of Georgia indicates the legal status for the species is threatened. There is no federal legal status. The listed threats for *R. prunifolium* are logging and poaching. In her book *Field Guide to the Rare Plants of Georgia*, Linda Chafin indicates that a key to protecting the species is safeguarding locations and the prosecution of poachers.<sup>2</sup> The safeguarding of knowledge of known locations is apparently a key to the Georgia Department of Natural Resources efforts to protect the threatened species.

### Callaway Gardens

One of the sites where Danny and Steve found natural populations is near Callaway Gardens in Harris County, Georgia. The story of the formation of Callaway Gardens by Cason Callaway is well documented. In 1930, Cason

▼ Photos 1-4—Plumleaf Azalea color can vary widely.



Courtesy Charles Andrews



Courtesy Charles Andrews



Courtesy Charles Andrews



Courtesy Charles Andrews

Callaway, a wealthy textile manufacturer, and his wife Virginia, acquired 2,500 acres of Harris County land on which they planned to make a home. This land has been described as gullied red hills and abandoned farmland. The couple expanded their land holdings over the next 20 years. They were inspired by the discovery of *R. prunifolium* on their property, some time before the gardens became a reality. This inspiration led the Callaways to concentrate on conserving native plants found in the area. Mr. Callaway was awarded a conservation medal from the Garden Club of America in 1946 for his vigorous seed propagation program that led to large scale planting of *R. prunifolium*. Callaway Gardens opened to the public in 1952. The late Fred Galle was hired as their Director of Horticulture in 1953. Fred continued the aggressive program of acquiring native azaleas for the gardens. Callaway Gardens is said to be the world's largest azalea garden. While many of the plantings are Asian azaleas, there are a large number of native azaleas. Probably the world's largest plantings of *R. prunifolium* and *R. colemanii* are located there. Fred Galle's dedicated work was certainly a factor in the development of the gardens.

## Providence Canyon

The most popular natural location for *R. prunifolium* is Providence Canyon State Park, located west of the town Lumpkin, Georgia, in Stewart County. In the Spring 1999 edition of the *Journal of the American Rhododendron Society*, are two articles on Providence Canyon. One of the articles is by well-respected authority and plant explorer Clarence Towe of Walhalla, South Carolina.<sup>3</sup> The other article is by plant explorer and landscaper George McLellan of Gloucester, Virginia.<sup>4</sup> Both of these respected azalea authorities cite the feeling of being "out west" when visiting the canyon. Clarence's article includes material about *R. prunifolium* and other Georgia native azaleas and includes significant details of the canyon's nine forks and various trails of the park. George's account includes information about a field trip that he led to the site. He also describes the physical characteristics of the canyon. He describes the varieties of colors of *R. prunifolium* that he and his associates found on their visit. He indicates, "We found deep scarlet, red, vermilion, orange-red, orange, pale orange, apricot, deep salmon, pale salmon and even one that I would call flesh pink." He further speculates that a more extensive exploration would have resulted in a good yellow. A 2016 field trip to the canyon resulted in some of the pictures included in this article. [See Providence Canyon photos, p. 7]

Differing opinions exist as to whether other native azaleas grow in Providence Canyon. In the article referenced above by Clarence Towe, he states that a few *R. arborescens* "have found a temporary niche in the changing landscape." The lepidote *R. minus* is present in the canyon in fairly large numbers. Earl Sommerville, another authority who has explored the canyon, indicated that once he saw a white native at Providence Canyon that appeared to be *R. viscosum* var. *serrulatum*. On a return visit he found a hole where he had seen the plant.

## Characteristics

Most authorities indicate that *R. prunifolium* has its closest affinity to *R. cumberlandense*. Skinner indicates that its color range is not much different from *R. cumberlandense*. He states, "They both have those characteristic ridged flower tubes in the bud stage; they are both late, both red, and in more detailed morphology have little to show reason why they could not be quite logically and quite possibly regarded as high and low elevation derivatives from a common ancestor."<sup>1</sup> Ron Miller shares a similar viewpoint. In Skinner's article he (Skinner) refers to a discussion with S. D. Coleman, the Georgia nurseryman and native azalea authority who lived in Ft. Gaines, Georgia.

S. D. Coleman wrote several articles about his experiences with native azaleas, including the plumleaf azalea.<sup>5</sup> He states that it bloomed on his native azalea trail from June to November. Further, he laments the construction of dams, which have flooded many woodlands and destroyed much native plant material. He also discusses how he desired to get as many color and bloom time variations as he could, many times from areas that were to be flooded by these dams. His collection varied from yellow to deep red forms. Coleman says that there were no other azaleas growing or blooming in the areas where he collected and no existence of cross breeding. Thus, he concludes the species will come true from seed. He does say that *R. viscosum* var. *serrulatum* does bloom late but he had not found the two growing together in the same area.

*R. prunifolium* does not have a fragrance. The leaves and twigs are almost glabrous (without hair), and there are no hairs on the bloom's tubes. Its blooms have only 5 to 8 individual flowers in its clusters. The size of the blooms (1-1/2 to 2 inches) makes up for this. The plumleaf azalea is described as growing to 12 to 15 feet, but some specimens in the wild grow to 20 feet. It can grow to a width of 6 to 8 feet. Garden plants can be easily maintained at 8 to 10 feet with proper pruning. It will not bloom in areas with too much shade. Some afternoon shade is necessary to protect the blooms, which appear in the hot summer. The species' blooms attract hummingbirds, butterflies and bees, all of which aid in pollinating the plants. It prefers a moist, well-drained, slightly acidic soil. Such conditions make it a good plant for woodland slope areas, which drain well. In non-sloping areas, mulching helps retain the needed moisture. The trees found in its natural growth areas include oaks, beech, various pines, and maples. It is capable of sprouting from its roots, but its primary method of reproduction is by its winged seeds, which are dispersed by wind.

Roland Harper first discovered *R. prunifolium* in 1903 in an area near Cuthbert, Georgia. About the same time, Eugene Smith discovered a population near Baker Hill, Alabama. Later the Arnold Arboretum introduced it to the public in 1918. Its late-blooming habit, its attractive blooms and its ability to flourish in southern heat are factors that have resulted in it being used in many breeding programs. Another factor is its ability to survive outside its natural range. It is rated by some as hardy in USDA Zones 5-9. This is a rather wide spread, from central Florida to points as far



Courtesy Ken Gohring



Courtesy Ken Gohring



Courtesy Ken Gohring



Courtesy Ken Gohring



Courtesy Ken Gohring



Courtesy Ken Gohring

▲ Photos 5-12—*Prunifolium* Color Variation in Providence Canyon.

north as southern Wisconsin, and in the east, coastal Maine. Performance in Zone 5 is marginal. Temperatures in the zone can drop to  $-20^{\circ}\text{F}$  and these low temperatures result in bud loss and in some cases plant destruction. Nevertheless, it does survive and flourish in areas outside its natural range.

### Forms

There are select *R. prunifolium* cultivars. One of the best is 'S. D. Coleman', named for the nurseryman mentioned earlier. This cultivar was used in numerous pollination efforts. The cultivars 'July Jester', 'July Jingle', 'July

Jewel', and 'July Jubilation' are four of the cultivars in which 'S. D. Coleman' was used.<sup>3</sup> The species used in these crosses included *R. arborescens* and *R. cumberlandense*. The hybridizing program at Weston Nurseries, presently in Massachusetts, by Edward Mezitt is one of the more successful programs in developing late blooming deciduous azaleas. *R. prunifolium* had a significant part in the development of these plants. Some of these with *R. prunifolium* heritage are 'Cherry Bomb', a July bloomer with large cherry red flowers, 'Tangerine Glow', a dark orange July bloomer, 'Everglow', which has orange-red flowers that appear in July and August, and 'Pennsylvania', a July bloomer with light pink flowers. The Weston hybrids are some of the most widely used natives to extend the bloom season into the summer. There are numerous other cultivars where this species was used. One of these is 'Late Date' developed by Clarence Towe and his associate Nick Anastos. Joe Schild of Hixson, Tennessee, nurseryman and former ASA president used *R. prunifolium* in developing 'Summer Heat'. The cultivar 'Memory of Fred Galle' is a natural hybrid collected by Fred and his good friend August Kehr.



Courtesy Don Hyatt

▲ *Rhododendron prunifolium*, Artist's Painting.

### Galle's Work with *R. prunifolium*

Fred Galle conducted hybridization projects involving *R. prunifolium* in the 1960s. He crossed it with *R. arborescens*. The flower colors of the results of the cross fertilization varied from "light yellowish pink to deep pink." Further, he added that all plants that varied in color from the color of the parents had slight fragrance. These plants bloomed in early to mid July. He also crossed *R. prunifolium* with *R. viscosum* var. *serrulatum*. All of these seedlings had varying shades of orange yellow flowers, slight fragrance, and some had pink tubes. These plants bloomed in late April to early May, earlier than either of the parents. Fred was an exacting master.<sup>6</sup> Hank Bruno, who worked at Callaway after Fred, stated in an article that Galle attempted 200 crosses of *R. prunifolium* and *R. arborescens* at Callaway. Believing that only superior plants should be named, none of the plants from these 200 crosses was named. In his long career only five Galle cultivars were registered.

### Sources

A survey of sellers advertizing on the internet resulted in a few nurseries who sell *R. prunifolium*. Mountain Mist Nursery, located south of Asheville, North Carolina, offers a wide selection of hybrid and species native azaleas, including *R. prunifolium*. Niche Gardens of Chapel Hill, North

Carolina, offers gallon-sized containers of *R. prunifolium* and a *R. prunifolium*-*R. arborescens* hybrid, 'Plum Sweet'. Mail Order Natives of Lee, Florida, offers gallon-sized plants for a good price and Woodlanders of Aiken, South Carolina, sells 1-gallon plants. A wholesale source of *R. prunifolium* and other native azaleas is Ernest Koone, whose Lazy K Nursery is in Pine Mountain, Georgia, near Callaway Gardens. Lazy K has the reputation of being the world's largest seller of native azaleas. Ernest, a long-time friend of Fred Galle and the operators of Callaway Gardens, has done extensive study and exploration of *R. prunifolium*. Ernest's nursery has a good rating on the Garden Watchdog site. Plant offerings by nurseries vary by time, and current offerings may not be the same as the ones indicated here.

### *R. prunifolium* Art

In addition to being a rhododendron and azalea authority, well-known writer, Don Hyatt is an artist. In August 2001 he began to try his hand at painting. He decided to do a painting of a *R. prunifolium* plant in bloom in his garden. Three days later he completed the painting, shown here. At the 2002 joint ASA/ARS national convention he won 1<sup>st</sup> place in the art show with this painting. Subsequent to doing the *R. prunifolium* painting, he has painted other illustrations of



native azaleas, rhododendrons, camellias, and other plants. He offers 16 watercolor prints to those interested. If you are interested in acquiring the painting shown or possibly others, visit his art gallery on his web site.

## Notes and References

- 1 Reprinted with permission from the *Morris Arboretum Bulletin*. April 1955. 6(2). "IN SEARCH OF NATIVE AZALEAS: Henry T. Skinner's Historic Trip, 1951". *Journal American Rhododendron Society*, Summer 2000 (<http://scholar.lib.vt.edu/ejournals/JARS/v54n3/v54n3-skinner.htm>).
- 2 Chafin, Linda G. *Field Guide to the Rare Plants of Georgia*. 2007. University of Georgia Press. 540 pages.
- 3 Towe, Clarence. 1999. "Providence Canyon: The End of the Trail." *Journal American Rhododendron Society*. Spring 1999. 53(2): 62-4. (<http://scholar.lib.vt.edu/ejournals/JARS/v53n2/>)
- 4 McLellan, George. 1999. "Providence Canyon: The End of the Trail." *Journal American Rhododendron Society*. Spring, 53(2): 65-6. (<http://scholar.lib.vt.edu/ejournals/JARS/v53n2/>)
- 5 Coleman, S. D. 1963, October. "Three Southern Azalea Species: *R. prunifolium*, *austrinum*, and *speciosum*." *Bulletin American Rhododendron Society*. 17(4). Transcription (OCR) also available online at Virginia Tech Digital Library and Archives. (<http://scholar.lib.vt.edu/ejournals/JARS/v17n4/v17n4-coleman.htm>).
- 6 Galle, F. C. 1967, July. "LUMPERS OR SPLITTERS." *Journal American Rhododendron Society*. (<http://scholar.lib.vt.edu/ejournals/JARS/v21n3/v21n3-galle.htm>)

Ken Gohring, a Missouri native, is retired from Norfolk Southern Corporation where he worked as a manager in the Operations Research Section. His gardening interests include rhododendrons—primarily native azaleas, native plants and vegetables. He is an active member of the Georgia Native Plant Society, the American Rhododendron Society and is a member of Georgia Botanical Society and the Vaseyi Chapter of the Azalea Society of America. He also edits and produces *Azalea Blooms*, the monthly newsletter for the Azalea Chapter of the ARS.

### For the Record: Winter 2018 Issue

In Richard Bauer's article about the ARS Convention in Bremen, Germany, the description of activities on p. 78 should have said the tour site was Bremen Rhododendron Park, not Garden. Photo 14 shown on p. 79 was not taken in Bremen, but in Bad Zwischenahn, described in the last full paragraph on p. 77. We regret both errors.

# Recognizing Generous ASA Members

By Paul A. Beck, Treasurer

I would like to recognize and thank the following members who made donations totaling \$3,496 to the Operating Fund of the Azalea Society of America in 2018 and \$2,715 to the Azalea Research Fund. My apologies if I missed anyone.

## Operating Fund

### Up to \$50

Andes, Jack Parker  
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DuRant, Suzi & Nelson  
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Leonard, Doug & Tripp, Jane  
White, Debbie & Mike

### \$101 to \$500

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### \$1,000 and over

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Northern Virginia Chapter

## Azalea Research Fund

### Up to \$50

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Burd, Ginger & Sam  
Carlson, Larry & Barbara  
Coleman, W. Sloan  
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Heilers, Jeffery  
O'Malley, Julie & T. J.  
Ritch, Francine  
Wallace, Peter G.  
Wilkins, Amanda  
Willis, Lloyd & Margaret

### \$2,500

Dolan Gardens (Frances Jones)

# Jim Brant Honored for His Role in the Hooper Bald Restoration Project

By Carolyn Beck—Oak Hill, Virginia

On November 2nd, 2017, at the Regional Forester's Honor Awards Ceremony held in Stone Mountain, Georgia, Jim Brant received an award in the category of Restored and Resilient Landscapes for his role in The Hooper Bald Restoration Project, National Forests of North Carolina. [See Photos 1 & 2.]

Dr. Duke Rankin, who was the United States Forest Service (USFS) Chief Botanist for the Cheoah District of the Nantahala National Forest during the project's formative years, nominated Jim for this award based on the following criteria:

1. Improvement to landscape restoration for threatened and endangered species.  
"The project addressed habitat needs for at least four sensitive and one federally-endangered species on 40 acres of early successional habitat that has proven to be unstable without active management. The project also improved conditions for pollinators and recreational users."
2. Innovation shown in achieving results.  
The innovation shown was in "crafting an agreement among the five agencies" with a vested interest in the project. Funding issues were overcome by actively recruiting volunteers and donations.
3. Significance and duration of stewardship activities.  
"The Hooper Bald Project united five agencies into a single project/mission that addressed multiple issues, none of which could have been addressed unilaterally by the Forest Service. In terms of volunteers, work hours, and donated resources, the Hooper Bald Project is the largest restoration project attempted on the Nantahala National Forest in at least twenty years. The project recently concluded its tenth year."
4. Geographical applicability.  
"The actions taken, and the lessons learned can be applied to any grassy bald in the Southern Appalachians, an endangered community type directly threatened by a combination of lack of historic management and climate change."
5. Scope of prevention, environmental considerations, adaptive management, and improvements of ecological health.

This project "addressed the loss of high elevation early successional habitat for at-risk species" by restoring and maintaining native plant (*Rhododendron calendulaceum*, flame azalea) and animal [*Glaucomys sabrinus*, northern flying squirrel, and *Phyciodes batesii*, tawny crescent butterfly] species diversity. It has reduced "the rate of species endangerment by contributing to species recovery and



▲ Photo 1—US Forest Service Award to Jim Brant. Shown (l to r): Frank Beum, Deputy Regional Forester; Jim Brant; John Crockett, Acting Deputy Regional Forester; Anna Briatico, Acting Deputy Regional Forester; and Allen Nichols, Forest Supervisor for National Forests of North Carolina.

▼ Photo 2—Jim Brant shown with his 2017 Regional Forester's Award.



augmenting populations of at-risk plants [*R. calendulaceum*] and habitat for at-risk animals [*Picea rubens*, red spruce, nesting sites for the northern flying squirrel].

## A Little History

The concept of a restoration effort emerged as a result of a visit to Hooper Bald by members of the Middle Atlantic Chapter (MAC) of the American Rhododendron Society (ARS) Species Study Group in 2006. During their trek over the bald, they felt both excitement and distress. The discovery of a large population of *Calendulaceum*, which boasted unusually large flowers in a wide range of colors, was exhilarating. But the fact that these azaleas were being

overgrown by encroaching vegetation brought the realization that these exceptional forms would probably not survive if left unattended.

The concept took form during a meeting later that year with various state and federal agencies, all with a vested interest in the area: US Forest Service, US Fish and Wildlife Service, NC Fish and Wildlife Service, the NC Wildlife Resources Commission, and Southern Highland Reserve. By participating in a forum where each agency could define its objectives and discuss ways to problem-solve, Jim and George McLellan, as representatives of MAC, were able to obtain an agreement that outlined how the project was to proceed.

The project was formally implemented in 2007. Jim's leadership skills were effectively used to formulate goals, design and implement a plan of action, enlist volunteers, arrange for financial assistance, and maintain the required reporting and paperwork.

## Progress Report

As of this report, the following original goals set for the project have all been met:

- Clearing the encroaching vegetation from around the azaleas using hand tools. At least two workdays per year have resulted in the release of about 5 acres of the bald. Mowing by USFS staff has kept the area from reverting back to forest.
- Evaluating the response to actions taken.
- Observing and describing the various *Calendulaceum* forms.
- Tagging and mapping individual azaleas.
- Providing an attractive destination for visitors with the hope that this would inspire them to become stewards of our native treasures.
- Contributing to the ASA and ARS seed exchanges to sustain this important gene pool.
- Propagating the most magnificent forms.
- Augmenting populations of *Calendulaceum*. Approximately 1000, grown from seed collected on Hooper Bald, were planted onto Hooper and a nearby bald in 2011 and 2013.

## Future goals

- Educating the public, including by guided tours of Hooper, to encourage their appreciation of native azaleas so that they could become stewards of this campaign.
- Assigning GPS coordinates for the various *Calendulaceum*.
- Creating a database to maintain the information gathered over the course of the project.

## Volunteers

It is Jim's expressed view that this award represents the inspiration, dedication, and determination of many others who worked to make the Hooper Bald Project a great success:

John Brown, Vaseyi ASA	Ken Gohring
Kim Hainge	Don Hyatt
J Jackson	Lindy Johnson
Bob and Audrey Stelloh	Revonda Williams

In particular, George McLellan is to be recognized as an equal participant in all phases of this project. Jim notes that "without George's efforts and expertise, the results would not have been the same. He is sharing this award with me in all ways that count."

In addition to the above-listed individuals, many groups have participated, including Boy Scouts, local residents, students at local public schools, the Sierra Club, USFS staff, members of the ARS and ASA from across the county. Collectively, the Hooper Bald team has contributed more than 5,000 volunteer hours. Jim and George have personally donated over 1,500 hours each.

## Conclusion

*R. calendulaceum* has long been recognized as a highly desirable plant: William Bartram, the famous American naturalist, considered it "the most celebrated species of Azalea..., certainly the most gay and brilliant shrub yet known." Frederick Pursh, a German botanist, considered it "without exception, the handsomest shrub in North America."<sup>1</sup> So, we, who are passionate about azaleas, are eternally grateful to Jim for reaching out to the US Forest Service and establishing a successful working relationship with them that has enabled the Hooper Bald Team to make the Hooper Bald Restoration Project a fabulous success.

If you would like join in the workdays on Hooper or would like more information on the Hooper Bald Restoration Project, please contact Jim Brant at [jandpbrant@verizon.net](mailto:jandpbrant@verizon.net).

## References

- 1 Andrews, Charles. Spring 2018. "The Southern Appalachians: An Azalea Paradise". *The Azalean*. 40(1): 4-10, 18-21.
- For additional reading related to native deciduous azaleas:
- Beck, Carolyn. Fall 2012. "Hooper Bald Native Azalea Project." *Journal American Rhododendron Society (JARS)*. 66(4): 184-190.
- Brown, John. Summer 2009. "Releasing the Balds." *The Azalean*. 31(2): 43-44.
- Hyatt, Donald. Fall 2001. "Best of the Best: In Search of Native Azaleas." *The Azalean*. 23(3): 52-57.
- Towe, L. Clarence. *American Azaleas*. Timber Press, 2004.
- See also Don Hyatt's website at <http://www.donaldhyatt.com/natives>.

Carolyn Beck is a retired Registered Nurse. She is an active member of the Northern Virginia Chapter and is currently in charge of fund-raising. Carolyn and her husband, Paul, are concentrating their efforts on the chapter's Legacy Hybrids (see [NV-ASA.org](http://NV-ASA.org) for more information on their Legacy Project).

# Frieda's Red to 'Benjamin' to 'Freida's Benjamin'— An Evergreen Azalea Story

By William C. Miller III—Bethesda, Maryland

Part of the fun of azaleas is pursuing the “little mysteries” that present themselves from time to time. The small plant (often little more than a rooted cutting) that you acquired at some point in the past is blooming for the first time and it is beautiful, but it isn't the flower that you were expecting. Of course, there are a number of possibilities. There could be more than one azalea with the same cultivar name (there are five 'Akebono' listed in the *International Rhododendron Register and Checklist*, hereafter IRRC<sup>1</sup>). It could reflect an error in propagation (a mix-up in taking cuttings). It could be an error in tagging (many hundreds of little green plants, not in bloom, tend to look alike). Or, it could simply be a sport of the correct plant (a different error in propagation).

I acquired a number of “new-to-me” plants at the 2016 joint ASA/ARS national meeting in Williamsburg, Virginia. One was tagged Frieda's Red (not a cultivar name<sup>2</sup>). It was in a quart pot, and it looked like it might be a three-year-old plant. Kind of scraggly, it nevertheless bloomed for me in 2017. It is a very attractive flower, but my first impression was that it was rather poorly named [See Fig. 1]. The flower did not resemble anything that I would name anybody's red, but it did look kind of familiar. I was sure that I had seen the flower somewhere before.

The professional-looking green tag [See Fig. 2] that was attached to the plant was my starting point. It identified the plant as an evergreen azalea. It gave the presumed cultivar

name as Frieda's Red, and it identified the hybrid group as Unknown. After seeing the first flower, I thought the description on the tag was pretty good. It read “Flowers white w bright, salmon-red broad stripe down the center of each lobe. Single with 5 rounded, overlapping lobes, medium size. Blooms midseason. Leaves glossy.” If you examine the white border more closely you will see that the flower is actually another irregular-white-margin-type like 'Ben Morrison'. With Frieda's Red, the white margin is enlarged and has extended significantly inboard toward the axis of the petal. In other words, the white margin is significantly broader than 'Ben Morrison'.

Fortunately, there are a number of approaches that can help address these types of mysteries. I began with the IRRC and its twelve supplements. The IRRC records all registered cultivar names and epithets that have come to their attention as a result of ongoing research. The most recent supplement, the 12th, is current through 2016. Doing the math, a three-year-old plant that I acquired in 2016 obviously existed prior to 2016. Frieda's Red, however, did not appear in the IRRC, so that was a dead end.

## ASA Image Library and the First Big Revelation

My next stop was the image library on the ASA website.<sup>3</sup> A search on Frieda's Red resulted in two hits for Frieda's Red & White Stripe (not a cultivar name<sup>2</sup>), with accompanying images that looked like my Frieda's Red. The text in both records was identical and here was the first big revelation. “The name is unofficial as its true one is unknown. It is just too beautiful not to share. May be a sport of 'Dogwood'...” In my experience, the irregular white margin flower is often a sport of something else, so this was not unexpected. This also suggests that the cultivar name on the green tag was truncated and equally unofficial. The descriptive text goes on to state that “...the original plant was purchased from Azalea Trace Nursery in Maryland; they obtained it from Frieda Hill of Pavo, Georgia.”

For the record, the correct spelling of Mrs. Hill's first name is Freida. I corresponded with her for a number of years, and we occasionally chatted on the phone. She was an azalea collector, and one could sense her enthusiasm even over the phone. I had an opportunity to visit Hill's Nursery & Greenhouses in Pavo, Georgia, in 1993, and I found her to be even more delightful in person. Her nursery grew other things, but she especially liked azaleas and camellias. She passed away in 2002.

## The ASA Maillist

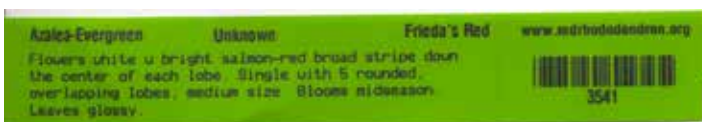
The ASA Maillist<sup>4</sup> is also a valuable resource. Occasionally, someone will ask a question or post an image and ask if anyone knows what it is. Utilizing this



Photo William C. Miller III

▲ Figure 1— Frieda's Red, photo taken on April 23, 2017.

▼ Figure 2— Green professional-looking tag attached to Frieda's Red.



mechanism, an inquirer has an opportunity to bring to bear the considerable expertise from across the entire azalea community. Here is just such an example:

On March 23, 2012, Jim Thornton (Conyers, Georgia) posted two images of an unknown with the question “Any idea of the name of this Az?”

Fourteen minutes later, Dr. Joe Coleman (Lithonia, Georgia) posted “It is ‘Ben’ or ‘Benjamin’, a sport off of ‘Ben Morrison’. A small plant that doesn’t out grow its place and very neat!”.

On April 18, 2012, Maarten van der Giessen (Mobile, Alabama) posted “Got in on this one late. I agree with Joe that it’s ‘Benjamin’, but not a sport of ‘Ben Morrison’. If Joe searches, I’ll bet he’ll remember getting this from the late Freida Hill of Pavo, GA. She named it after her grandson. It’s a sport of ‘Dogwood’.”

It is my considered opinion that Maarten is correct. I see no indication that ‘Ben’ or ‘Benjamin’ is related to ‘Ben Morrison’ based on a morphological comparison.<sup>5</sup>

### ‘Dogwood’ and its Derivatives

Given that ‘Benjamin’ is a sport of ‘Dogwood’, it occurred to me that a review of ‘Dogwood’ was probably in order. In

Galle<sup>6</sup>, I found ‘Dogwood’ listed under “Miscellaneous Inter-Group Evergreen Hybrids and Miscellaneous Evergreen Azaleas.” In the process, I discovered the existence of ‘Coral Dogwood’ and confirmed the status of ‘Variegated Dogwood’, which I was aware of and had seen before. Galle indicated that all three were patented, so I pulled copies of the patent documents utilizing the US Patent and Trademark Office website’s search engine.<sup>7</sup> As a cross check, I conducted a second search on the inventor name field to see if additional cultivars would surface, and a fourth azalea, ‘Nancy Marie’, was identified. See Table 1 for a comparison of ‘Dogwood’, its west coast derivatives, and ‘Benjamin’ (actually shown as ‘Freida’s Benjamin in Table 1 for reasons that will become clear later). All four of the patented plants are listed in the IRRC. The only noted discrepancy is that the IRRC contradicts the patent information and cites ‘Dogwood’, instead of ‘Variegated Dogwood’, as the origin for ‘Nancy Marie’.

The patent document is a trove of information which provides multiple avenues to pursue. I contacted Geo. J. Ball, Inc. of West Chicago, IL the assignee of record for ‘Dogwood’, ‘Coral Dogwood’, ‘Variegated Dogwood’, and ‘Nancy Marie’ to see what they could tell me. Since it seems none of the four azaleas is common on the east coast, I hoped Ball had images. Vickie Beutler, an Image Archive Specialist for the Ball Horticultural Company, replied “Unfortunately,

▼ Table 1— The Patented Evergreen Azalea ‘Dogwood’, its Patented Sports, and ‘Freida’s Benjamin’

Cultivar	‘Dogwood’	‘Coral Dogwood’	‘Variegated Dogwood’	‘Nancy Marie’	‘Freida’s Benjamin’
Origin	seedling of unknown parentage	sport of ‘Dogwood’	sport of ‘Dogwood’	sport of ‘Variegated Dogwood’	sport of ‘Dogwood’
Patent No.	PP3,093	PP3,752	PP4,455	PP5,389	N/A
Inventor	Alfred N. Roberts Corvallis, OR	Kenneth F. Fessler Woodburn, OR	Richard A. Arnesen Northridge, CA	Richard A. Arnesen Northridge, CA	Freida Hill Pavo, GA
Assignee	Geo. J. Ball, Inc. West Chicago, IL	Geo. J. Ball, Inc. West Chicago, IL	Geo. J. Ball, Inc. West Chicago, IL	Geo. J. Ball, Inc. West Chicago, IL	N/A
Patent Date	April 4, 1972	July 29, 1975	August 28, 1979	January 15, 1985	N/A
Description (The descriptions for the patented plants were extracted from the patent documents. The description for ‘Benjamin’ is from the green tag affixed to my specimen. See Fig. 2.)	2 ¼- to 2 ½- inch white single flower, often stippled with Delft Rose 020/2; blooms early spring to midseason.	2 ¼- to 2 ½- inch single flower, Delft Rose 020/1 shading to 020 at edges; blotched with China Rose 024/1 and freckled with 024 at base of standard and upper wings; blooms early to midseason of spring.	2- to 2 ¼-inch single flower, variegated white and Camellia Rose 622 at tip with 622/1 to 622/2 in the petal body, the upper three petals having a blotch of Tyrian Purple 727 extending outwardly from near the base, and each of the petals being irregularly bordered with white; blooms early to midseason spring.	2- to 2 ½- inch flower, white with middle stripe of Camellia Rose 622 to 622/1; upper three petals are speckled with Tyrian Purple 727; star-like with each petal being consistently 1/3 coral surrounded by white on each side; blooms at any time during spring.	“Flowers white w bright, salmon-red broad stripe down the center of each lobe. Single with 5 rounded, overlapping lobes, medium size. Blooms midseason. Leaves glossy.”

we do not have images for any of the azalea varieties you specified. I was unable to determine if we are even selling these varieties any longer.”

The inventor (the patent term for the person who invented or discovered and asexually reproduced the distinct and new variety) submits images as part of the plant patent application process. However, the images available to the public online are black and white, grainy, and quite useless. Color images are available from the Patent Office by special order, but the cost is prohibitive. Good images are useful because the plant patent descriptions are often difficult to comprehend. Then there is the question of one’s comfort with, in this case, Wilson’s Horticultural Colour Chart. For example: Camellia Rose, Claret Rose, China Rose, Delft Rose, and Tyrian Purple hold no special meaning for me, and I value a good picture for details that might not convey in a written description (e.g., the distribution of dots in the blotch).

## Second Big Revelation-Color Images

Noting that these patented azaleas originated on the West Coast, I reasoned that they might have had difficulty working their way east in the absence of major marketing efforts and promotion of the sort practiced by organizations like Plant Development Services, Inc. (PDSI). It seemed reasonable to me that I stood a greater chance of locating information and images from sources on the West Coast and that suspicion proved to be true. My email to Milfeld’s Nursery, Inc (Peggy and Nick Milfeld) in Riverside, CA, resulted in a response from Anthony Carrillo, the nursery’s general manager.<sup>8</sup> Here was the second big revelation. Mr. Carrillo’s email contained embedded, thumbnail images of ‘Dogwood’, ‘Variegated Dogwood’, and ‘Nancy Marie’, which demonstrated, conclusively, that ‘Nancy Marie’ is a dead ringer for ‘Benjamin’ [Fig. 3].

Now with the focus on ‘Nancy Marie’, I sought the Internet’s assistance in finding a current physical address for Mr. Richard A. Arnesen who was the inventor of ‘Variegated Dogwood’ and ‘Nancy Marie’. In a letter to Mr. Arnesen, I indicated that I was an azalea hobbyist, that I was working on an article for *The Azalean*, and that I was interested in learning more about and obtaining images of ‘Dogwood’, ‘Coral Dogwood’, ‘Variegated Dogwood’, and ‘Nancy Marie’.

While my letter was not “returned” (a returned letter

would suggest a bad address), it did not result in a response. Even if one identifies a promising address, there is no way to determine how “old” the information is. Further, it is not possible to determine if the individual is still alive since there is no guarantee that a death notice or an obituary was generated. Essentially, there is an information lag, a variable and immeasurable gap, between reality and the Internet’s understanding of reality. Input from Mr. Arnesen would have been useful. Unfortunately, not everyone reacts favorably to contacts from strangers.

## Conclusion

Faced with an occasional misidentification, there are steps that one can take that improve the odds of successfully finding out the correct name of your mystery plant. Between the Internet and various online systems, an investigation that would have taken months in the past can now be accomplished in a matter of days. Experts like Buddy Lee, Maarten van der Giessen, Ronnie Palmer, Earl Sommerville, Harold Greer, and Dr. Joe Coleman, with hundreds of years of collective experience, are just an email click away.

Given that the several names previous attached to this azalea all had problems, it remains to be seen how the late Mrs. Hill’s azalea should be named. In a personal communication to the author, Maarten van der Giessen expressed a preference for ‘Benjamin’.<sup>9</sup> While ‘Ben’ has the advantage of brevity, I agreed with Maarten. I favored ‘Benjamin’ for the practical reason that the longer name has greater survivability on tags ... especially on the typical soft metal (pen impression) tag used by so many azalea growers.<sup>10</sup> Unfortunately, I recently discovered that the cultivar name ‘Benjamin’ already appears in the IRRC on an evergreen azalea introduced by A. Haerens in Belgium in 1935. Presented with this new complication, I dashed a quick email off to Maarten in which I suggested several names any of which could replace ‘Benjamin’. Maarten responded, “‘Freida’s Benjamin’ has a ring to it. I never heard her call her grandson Ben, only Benjamin.”<sup>9</sup> Therefore, I propose that we name Mrs. Hill’s azalea ‘Freida’s Benjamin’. The name is unique, it isn’t already in the IRRC, and it honors Freida (note the spelling of Freida... e before i) in the process.

All the plant patents mentioned in this article have expired so there is no sensitivity there. The nature of “sporting” is such that it does not matter which of the five

▼ Figure 3— (L to R) Images of ‘Dogwood’, ‘Variegated Dogwood’, and ‘Nancy Marie’ from Milfeld’s Nursery in Riverside, CA.



Photo Nick Milfeld

cultivars (shown in Table 1) one starts with. Eventually, you will see the other three flowers at some time in the future.<sup>11</sup> It is hoped that reversions and sports of the ‘Dogwood’- related azaleas will not continue to be repeatedly viewed as “new and different,” and given new names. References like the IRRC and organizations like the Azalea Society of America can play a role in preventing the continued proliferation of new names for existing cultivars. If you do not have access to the IRRC and you are planning to introduce an azalea, you can always ask Michael

Martin Mills, the North American Rhododendron Registrar, whether the cultivar name you have selected meets the cultivar name guidelines. His email is [arsregisterar@gmail.com](mailto:arsregisterar@gmail.com), and it is worth the effort to avoid the confusion and embarrassment of establishing an invalid cultivar name that you later have to walk away from. In addition, by notifying him of your plans early on, it documents your intended use of the proposed cultivar name and establishes your priority.

## ‘Linda’s Star’ Registered

The Newly Registered Cultivar Names section of JARS, Vol. 71, No. 3, Summer 2017 reports that ‘Linda’s Star’ has been registered by Kenneth Menke of Tallahassee, FL. Reported to be a sport of ‘Dogwood’, the description and accompanying image suggest that it is the same flower as ‘Freida’s Benjamin’ and ‘Nancy Marie’.

Nancy Marie’ and Freida’s Benjamin’ (the proposed new name for the plant heretofore known in the azalea community as: 1. Frieda’s Red, 2. Frieda’s Red & White Stripe, 3. ‘Ben’, and 4. ‘Benjamin’) are the same flower, independently derived from different cultivars, by individuals on opposite coasts... and as Paul Harvey would say... “Now you know the rest of the story.”<sup>12</sup>

## Notes and References

1. Leslie, A. C. (comp). 2004. *International Rhododendron Register and Checklist* (2nd ed.). London: Royal Horticultural Society. The twelve IRRC Supplements to the 2nd edition are available on the Internet in pdf format and can be searched using Adobe Acrobat Reader.
2. The epithets Frieda’s Red and Frieda’s Red & White Stripe are not suitable cultivar names. The former appears to be a truncated form of the latter; the flower is not red; Freida, a reference to Mrs. Freida Hill of Pavo, GA, is misspelled in both; and the ampersand symbol (&) is not permitted by the *International Code of Nomenclature for Cultivated Plants*. Finally, Art 21H.1 states that “A cultivar name should not be published if it may give the impression that the cultivar has one or more characters that it does not possess.” Specifically, Frieda’s Red is not a red flower, as the truncated name would mislead you to believe.
- 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.
3. The Web link for ASA image library is: [www.azaleas.org/azaleas/](http://www.azaleas.org/azaleas/)
4. The Web link for the ASA Maillist is: [groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/azaleas/info](http://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/azaleas/info). The reader is reminded that one must join the Azalea section of the Yahoo! Groups system in order to access the legacy postings referenced here.
5. Ordinarily, I would have questioned the cultivar status of the epithets ‘Ben’ or ‘Benjamin’ for want of a published description. However, the Northern Virginia Chapter of the ASA produced and made available a list of plants that were going to be at the 2016 ARS/ASA national meeting. Under the name Frieda’s Red appears the synonym ‘Ben’ (single quotes added) and a description. ‘Ben’ does not already appear in the IRRC.
6. Galle, Fred C. 1987. *Azaleas*. Revised and Enlarged Edition. Timber Press, p. 290.



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7. The link for the Patent Office Web page to search for and obtain copies of patents is: [www.uspto.gov/patents-application-process/search-patents](http://www.uspto.gov/patents-application-process/search-patents)
8. I had the pleasure of meeting Peggy and Nick Milfeld in 1989 when we accompanied Dr. John Creech on a trip to Japan to attend the 1st International Azalea Festival and Symposium in Kurume. Dr. Creech published an account of the trip in *The Azalean*, September 1989. 11(3): 46-49.
9. Maarten van der Giessen, e-mail messages to author, May 15, 2017 and September 24, 2018.
10. In only a few years, the original pen impressions on the “permanent” soft metal tags eventually become obscured and indecipherable from the effects of environmental forces unknown (inevitable wear). Similarly, and consistent with my experience with “permanent” ink, the longer name would be advantageous as ink on labels “ages” at a variable rate and a partial name is often enough to allow identification
11. This is not a case of “new math.” There are five cultivars in Table 1, but ‘Freida’s Benjamin’ and ‘Nancy Marie’ are the same flower, so three is the correct number here.
12. Paul Harvey Aurandt (1918-2009) was an ABC Radio Networks news and commentary broadcaster who was known for his very entertaining “The Rest of the Story” segments which concluded appropriately with... “and now you know the rest of the story.”

*The author expresses appreciation to Dr. Judy Karpen of Silver Spring, MD, to Peggy and Nick Milfeld and Anthony Carrillo of Milfeld’s Nursery in Riverside CA, and to Maarten van der Giessen of Van Der Giessen Nursery, Inc. in Mobile, AL for their assistance in the discovery phase of this article.*

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, the longest serving member of the ASA’s Editorial Advisory Board, and a frequent contributor to *The Azalean*.

# Navigating *The Azalean* Online

*By Paul Beck—Treasurer and Assistant Webmaster*

This is the third in a series of articles describing the interactive features of the new ASA website. This article focuses on the online edition of *The Azalean*. The search page can be found by clicking on the menu **The Azalean->Azalean Online**. This article is a brief tutorial on how to use the various capabilities related to searching, reading, and ordering *The Azalean*.

## Searching

There are two methods to use to search for articles in *The Azalean*. At the top of the **Azalean Online** page is a Google® Custom Search bar. This works like every Google search, restricting the search area to be *The Azalean*. Enter one or more search terms, and press Enter or click the blue search button. The search results will appear in a “lightbox” on top of *The Azalean* page.

Below the Google search bar, the first time you load the page, are a set of detailed search instructions. These explain how to perform the next type of search, which limits the displayed search results to a range of **publication years**, words in the **title** or **author names**. You can read the instructions displayed on the page, so they will not be repeated here. After the first search is performed, the instructions will disappear to provide more information on the page. The **Clear Search** button will restore those instructions.

From year:	<input type="text"/>	Title:	<input type="text"/>
To year:	<input type="text"/>	Author:	<input type="text"/>
Show TOC:	<input type="checkbox"/> Click to show the table of contents and article titles simultaneously		
<input type="button" value="Submit"/>		<input type="button" value="Clear Search"/>	

Note the comment under the search dialog which reminds you that you need to login in order to view the contents of the 12 most recent issues. This is done to restrict this benefit

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## Browsing

Immediately below the search dialog is a series of quick jump hyperlinks to quickly display a range of issues restricted to the indicated years, as shown in the figure below. These links permit quickly hopping around to browse the different issues by year. Underneath these browse links is a list of the issues from the most recent backwards:

Issue Click issue title to view entire issue	TOC Click to view	Quantity	Order online via PayPal™
Volume 40, Number 3, Fall 2018	<a href="#">(Contents)</a>	9	Domestic \$2.00 USD <input type="button" value="Add to Cart"/>
Volume 40, Number 2, Summer 2018	<a href="#">(Contents)</a>	10	Domestic \$2.00 USD <input type="button" value="Add to Cart"/>

As shown in the above figure, the issue name, “**Volume 40, Number 3, Fall 2018**”, is plain text and is not a hyperlink. The note at the top of the issue name, “Click issue title to view entire issue” only works if you are logged in. Note that after you login, the issue title changes to a hyperlink. Clicking on that link will open the complete issue in a new tab. From this tab, you can quickly scroll through the entire issue, download it to your computer, or search through the full issue by pressing **Ctrl-F** and entering the search words in the small dialog that appears at the top of the window.

## Viewing Individual Articles

You will note “**(Contents)**” to the right of the issue title. This is a hyperlink that, when clicked, will produce a pop-up lightbox with the table of contents for the issue. At the top is the issue name, which is a hyperlink to display the full issue at once. Clicking on the individual article titles will open a PDF of the individual article in a separate tab.

## Displaying Table of Contents While Browsing

Under the search dialog is a “Show TOC” checkbox. Clicking this checkbox will show the table of contents inline as you browse, rather than in a pop-up “lightbox”. After you click the checkbox, you will need to click the **Submit** button to re-execute the search with the contents inline.

Issue Click issue title to view entire issue	TOC Click to view
<a href="#">Volume 40, Number 3, Fall 2018</a> (Click to view entire issue at once)	
<b>Pg</b>	<b>Article Title</b>
49	<a href="#">Cover</a>
50	<a href="#">President's Letter</a>
	<b>Author(s)</b>
	Rick Bauer

## Ordering Back Issues Online

If back issues are available in paper copy, they may be ordered online at this point by clicking the “Add to Cart” button at the end of each issue line. Before clicking on the button to order the issue, if you reside in Canada or an overseas location, you need to select the correct price with the drop-down list to the left of the button. After you click

the button, you will be taken to PayPal™ where you can change the quantity before completing the order.

Description	Price	Quantity	Total
Hardcopy Azalean more	\$2.00	- 1 + <input type="button" value="Remove"/>	\$2.00

Note that if you wish to order more than one issue, you should click the **Add to Cart** button for each issue before completing the transaction in PayPal™. Click the “**Continue shopping**” link in the upper right corner of your shopping cart to go back to the ASA website to add more issues. When you are finished adding issues and adjusting the quantities, you can then complete the transaction with the orange **PayPal™ Check Out** button (requires PP account) or the grey **Check Out** button, which allows you to pay with a credit card and does not require a PP account.

## Up Next—Calendars

The next article in this series will discuss the new chapter calendar feature, which can be located in the **About the Society->Chapters** menu. This new page allows the society chapters to have their calendars online for all to see.

Paul Beck is ASA's Treasurer and Assistant Webmaster. He is a Life member of the ASA and a member of the Northern Virginia Chapter.



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# Book Review

By William C. Miller III—Bethesda, Maryland

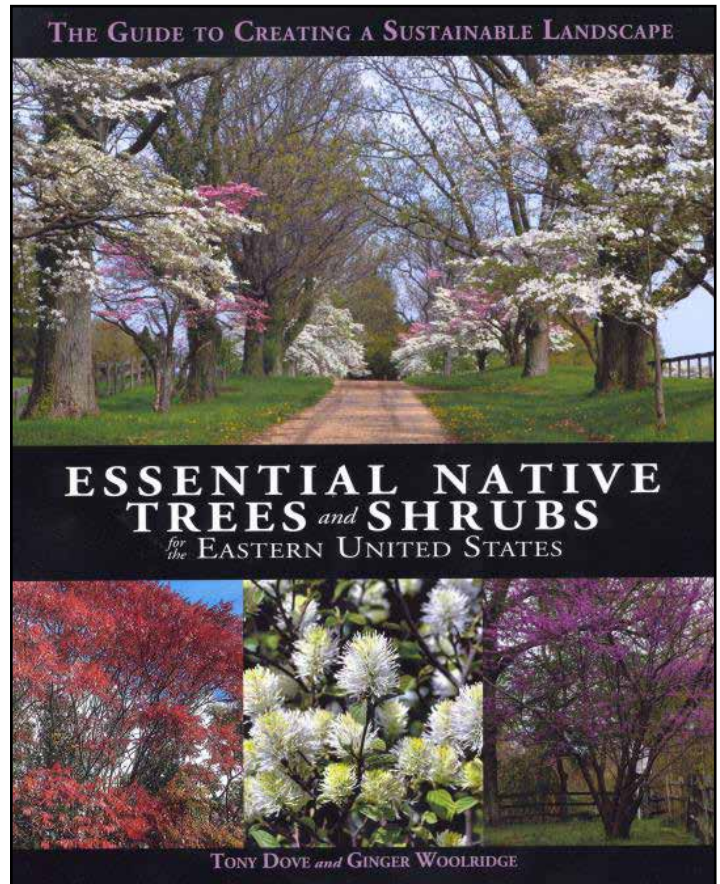
*Essential Native Trees and Shrubs for the Eastern United States* by James Anthony (Tony) Dove, Jr. and N. Virginia (Ginger) Woolridge. Published by Charlesbridge, Watertown, MA and designed and produced by Bunker Hill Studio Books, Piermont, NH, 2018, in hard cover. Identifiers: LCCN 2017016789 and 2017018661. ISBN 9781632892041, 9781632892058, and 9781623545031. Book dimensions and weight: 10.25 x 8.25 x 1.125 inches, 3.06 lbs, 313 pages, generously illustrated, and reinforced for library use. The inside flap gives the cost of this book at \$35 US and \$41 CAN. A quick Internet survey at the time of this review, indicates that the book is available from Amazon, Barnes & Noble, Alibris, Abe Books, Walmart, and several other sources that I am not familiar with. Internet prices range from \$16.76 (used) to \$35 (new), and the book is also available directly from Tony Dove... although he notes that Amazon might be the “easiest source.” (See Figures 1, 2.)

I have never had the pleasure of meeting Ginger Woolridge, but her credentials are excellent. She has a BS degree in Landscape Architecture from Penn State, and an MBA from the Wharton School of Business at the University of Pennsylvania. Her many years of experience in landscape design range from garden design, design instruction at the USDA, and commercial and residential development and construction. She serves on the Board of Trustees of 1000 Friends of Maryland and recently served as a consultant for the National Geographic Kids *Ultimate Explorer Field Guide: Trees*.

On the other hand, I have known Tony Dove for upwards of 36 years. Our paths first crossed in the early 1980s when he served on the Azalea Society’s (ASA) Board of Governors (1983-1989) and was elected to ASA National President in 1985.

Tony’s record and list of accomplishments is extensive. He earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Ornamental Horticulture at the University of Maryland in College Park in 1968, graduating first in his class. From 1969 to 1972, he served his country in the US Army in Vietnam.

Returning to civilian life, he was an Extension Agent in Horticulture in the Cooperative Extension Service in Annapolis. In 1973, he took a position as a Horticulturist II with the Anne Arundel County Department of Recreation and Parks where he designed, developed, and maintained 25 acres of formal and woodland gardens at the Historic London Town and Gardens at Edgewater, Maryland, on South River. Appointed Chief, Environmental Facilities and Programs in 1989, he was responsible for managing 4,000 acres of undeveloped parklands, wetlands, and public natural



▲ Figure 1— Cover image from the book’s dust cover

▼ Figure 2— Ginger Woolridge and Tony Dove



Photo Della Dove

areas including the acquisition and development of the Quiet Waters Farm and the Baltimore & Annapolis Trail. He was the administrative director of the Jug Bay Wetland Sanctuary and served as liaison with NOAA (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration within the US Department of Commerce) to obtain the National Estuarine Research Reserve Status for that sanctuary in 1990.

In 1991, Tony took a job as Branch Head of Horticultural Services at Tryon Palace Historic Sites and Gardens in New Bern, North Carolina where he supervised and maintained all the historic garden restorations as well as supervising the programs, festivals, projects, and activities for the main campus and the gardens. In 1994, he accepted a position as Director of the Clark Botanic Garden and Deputy Commissioner, Parks and Recreation Department in Albertson, New York. In 1997, Tony became Chief, Grounds Management Branch of the Horticultural Services Division for the Smithsonian Institution's 180 acres of gardens which annually hosts 24 million visitors. In 2006, Tony accepted a position as Horticulturist at the Smithsonian Environmental Research Center in Edgewater, Maryland, where he was responsible for the environmental, historic horticultural and educational programs for this 3,000-acre research and educational facility which included 13 miles of waterfront. On a very positive note, Tony retired on December 26, 2018, bringing to a close an impressive career of service to state, local and the federal government. While there was not a list

of publications in the biographical section of the book, I was able to determine that Tony has published four articles in *The Azalean*.<sup>1-4</sup>

Based on the authors' combined 75 years of experience, the book was designed from the outset to be a highly usable reference for landscape designers, horticulturists, home gardeners, and native plant enthusiasts. The Table of Contents page reveals the simplicity of the book's design. The Preface, written by Tony Dove, recounts his earliest personal experiences with his grandfather that shaped his philosophy, his future, his interest in native plants, and his understanding of and appreciation for the problems experienced by professionals and novices alike in the area of plant selection where the goal is to promote sustainability. He makes the case for the obvious advantages of using native plants, which by their circumstances and characteristics, are better and more reliable performers than many very lovely and highly desirable exotic plants from places far away.

The Introduction page, written by Ginger Woolridge, provides rationale for the book's environmental focus. She discusses the unique situation on the East Coast where we have a wealth of native plant material to choose from, and she reminds us that there is economy in recognizing the close relationship and the interdependency between native flora and fauna. From my perspective, a particularly nice touch is the section entitled "How to Use This Book." It shows how to take the guesswork out of identifying and evaluating suitable plant material for one's garden, or more importantly... for someone else's garden. In retrospect, I wish I had a dime for every desirable plant in my garden that I later discovered was an expensive mistake. It may have been a dismal failure where it only survived until the first frost, or if it survived, it was something the local deer population was content to regularly reduce to ground level (e.g. *Hosta* sp.). Then there were the situations where the plant survived but it ultimately proved to be too much plant for the space allocated to it. With the advent of this book, my plant selection process is significantly enhanced.

The book is divided into three parts. Part I is titled "Site Condition and Plant Attributes." Part II is "Primary Trees and Shrubs," and Part III is "Secondary Plants."

In Part I, the authors identified 22 desirable tree/shrub characteristics or traits (see Table 1.) Under each trait (A-V), is a list in tabular form, of time-tested native plants given in alphabetical order by binomial nomenclature. (See Fig. 3 for a partial example). These recommended trees/shrubs specifically exhibit the trait, and the reader is directed to pages in Part II where detailed information about the recommended plants can be found. For example, under Trait A, "Trees that are salt tolerant," there are 33 recommendations. The first tree on the list is *Aesculus pavia* and the reader is referred to page 52 in Part II for information about red buckeye, the common name for *Aesculus pavia*.

Part II contains detailed characterizations of the trees/shrubs: their use in the landscape, their seasons of interest, their form (general dimensions), their color features, the USDA zones, and their culture (where and how it grows). It also suggests suitable companion plants and the plant's relationship to wildlife. Finally, it includes an illustration

▼ Table 1— Desirable Landscape Traits.

- |   |
|---|
| A. Trees that are salt tolerant                           |
| B. Trees that are drought tolerant, once established      |
| C. Trees for poorly drained or compacted soils            |
| D. Trees suitable for rain gardens and bioretention areas |
| E. Trees suitable for irrigated rooftop gardens           |
| F. Trees that are wind tolerant, once established         |
| G. Trees that are evergreen                               |
| H. Trees that have showy flowers                          |
| I. Trees that have ornamental or interesting fruit        |
| J. Trees that have good autumn foliage colors             |
| K. Trees for street tree planting                         |
| L. Trees that are deer resistant                          |
| M. Trees that have exceptional winter interest            |
| N. Trees tolerant of shade                                |
| O. Trees that perform best in full sun                    |
| P. Trees for planting beneath utility lines               |
| Q. Trees for narrow spaces                                |
| R. Trees 50'+   |
| S. Trees 35' - 50'  |
| T. Trees 15' - 35'  |
| U. Trees that provide food and shelter for birds directly |
| V. Trees with attractive bark                             |

that shows the relative plant size at some time in the future. This is a very nice feature that addresses an often overlooked consideration. A carelessly chosen plant that eventually and significantly exceeds its allocated space can be an expensive headache.

Part III, "Secondary Plants," are desirable trees and shrubs, many of which are long time favorites, but which have problems or limitations that may outweigh their desirable traits. Thus, they are excluded from consideration in Parts I or II. Following Part III there are pages that describe the authors' backgrounds, a Glossary, a page of Sources, Photograph and Illustration Credits, and an index. It is worth emphasizing that the photographs are of first quality. With noted exceptions, the photographs were the work of the authors and Tony's wife Della. The illustrations are by Ginger Woolridge, and they are a major plus.

My bottom line... without reservation, I highly recommend this book.

### Additional References

- 1 Dove, James A. Jr. "Evolution of a Public Garden with Emphasis on Azaleas." Address presented May 1, 1983, at the National ASA meeting in Chevy Chase, Maryland. September 1983. *The Azalean*. 5(3): 55-56.
- 2 Dove, Tony. "Companion Plants for Azalea Gardens." March 1989. *The Azalean*. 11(1): 10-11.
- 3 Dove, James A. "Some Thoughts on Plant and Site Selection." March 1991. *The Azalean*. 13(1): 4-5.
- 4 Dove, James (Tony). "B.Y. Morrison Hybrid Azaleas." September 1992. *The Azalean*. 14(3): 62.

William C. Miller III is 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, the longest serving member of the ASA's Editorial Advisory Board, and a frequent contributor to *The Azalean*.

A. Trees that are salt tolerant		ALL CATEGORIES THAT APPLY:
<i>Aesculus pavia</i>	52	A, B, C, H, J, K, L, O, P, T
<i>Amelanchier</i> spp.	54	A, B, C, D, E, F, H, I, J, K, L, N, P, Q, T, U, V
<i>Betula lenta</i>	57	A, B, D, J, K, L, M, O, S, V
<i>Betula nigra</i>	59	A, C, D, L, M, O, R, V
<i>Carya ovata</i>	65	A, B, F, J, M, O, R, V
<i>Celtis laevigata</i>	68	A, B, C, D, F, K, L, M, N, R, U, V

▲ Figure 3— Partial List of Trees/Shrubs that are Identified as Salt Tolerant

▼ Figure 4— Page 52 from Part II that describes *Aesculus pavia*


## Aesculus pavia

Red Buckeye


**ATTRIBUTES/USE IN LANDSCAPE** – The red buckeye is a small tree or multi-stemmed shrub with showy spring flowers after early spring leaf out. It has attractive early spring and summer foliage. It may be used as a specimen, street tree, at the woodland edge, and in a rain garden for residential and park projects.

**SEASONS OF INTEREST**


WINTER




SPRING



SUMMER



AUTUMN



**FORM** – The red buckeye grows to about 10'–20' (35') tall × 10'–15' wide or more. Whether a small tree or large shrub, it usually has an irregular and open form with a rounded crown.


**COLOR** – Very early leaves emerge in spring followed by showy, profuse red flowers in early spring, following new leaves. The flowers are arranged on erect to

**USDA Zones: 4–8**

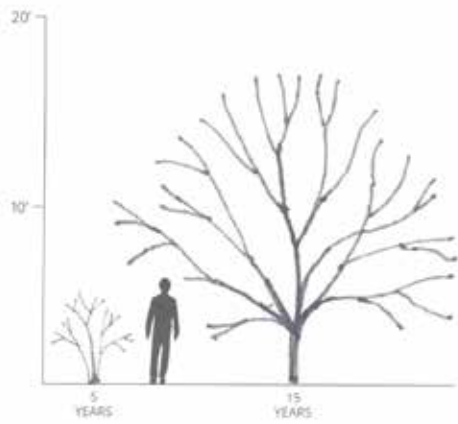
SUN	MOISTURE	pH
Full sun to part shade	Moist	5.5–7.5

drooping terminal panicles in clusters, 3'–6" long. The palmately compound leaves have five (seven) 3'–6" long leaflets plus a 2'–5" long petiole. The leaves can be very glossy green. They emerge bronze, turning to a medium to dark green above and pubescent gray below. Leaves drop early in autumn, often by September, with no appreciable autumn coloration.

**TEXTURE** – Medium coarse summer and winter.



*The showy, profuse, early-spring flowers of red buckeye.*



5 YEARS      15 YEARS

52
ESSENTIAL NATIVE TREES AND SHRUBS

# Chapter News and New Members

Note: There is now a calendar of chapter events on the ASA website. Go to <https://www.azaleas.org/calendars/>

## Arkansas Chapter News

*Ronnie Palmer—President*

The winter meeting was held the afternoon of February 12 at Salem United Methodist Church in Benton, AR. The program covered growing azaleas from cuttings through final placement in members' gardens. Debbie Atkinson gave an Internet tour of azalea websites, especially the main ASA website, [www.azaleas.org](http://www.azaleas.org). I also recommend the Northern Virginia website, [www.nv-asa.org](http://www.nv-asa.org). Other material covered at the meeting:

- ▶ Huang Azaleas—PowerPoint on these Chinese azaleas by Ronnie Palmer.
- ▶ Growers Project Update by Janet Rensing, Donna Palmer, Janet, and Ronnie repotted several 1-gallon plants to 3-gallon size, to be ready for chapter's October sale.
- ▶ Plant Sale—Prices on the plants not sold last October reduced by 25%.
- ▶ Photo Album—Thanks to those who sent in new photos. Frank Howard, chapter photographer takes photos at meetings and events.
- ▶ Dues—Last year, about 74 members joined, thanks to the half-year membership from the Azaleas 101 Conference. Today there are about 30.

March 1-3—The chapter has been invited to have a booth at the Arkansas Flower and Garden Show, with a theme of "Living Color." Volunteers needed to man the booth.

Personal note from Ronnie and Donna Palmer, owners of Azalea Hill, their nursery in White Hall, AR: Members of the Arkansas Chapter of the ASA are invited to come take cuttings at any time during the long cutting season (mid-May through mid-October). They also buy plastic pots 3 gal or larger and offer 20% discounts to ASA members.

## Ben Morrison Chapter

*Diane Reinke—Secretary*

Six regular chapter members, three associate members, and eight guests attended the chapter's holiday luncheon on November 30, 2018, at Hellas Restaurant in Millersville, Maryland. All enjoyed a delicious meal.

Don Hyatt of the Northern Virginia Chapter gave a very informative and colorful slide presentation about the recent American Rhododendron Society (ARS) conference earlier in the year in Germany. Azaleas were in peak bloom and the conference organizers did a fantastic job.

A raffle was held to raise funds for a memorial to former member Gray Carter. The Potomac Valley Chapter of the ARS and the Ben Morrison Chapter of the ASA will share the expense, which is estimated to be about \$1,200 for a teak

bench with a plaque. The raffle raised \$150. The bench will be located in a prominent part of the London Town Gardens in Edgewater, Maryland, which is just outside Annapolis.

The Ben Morrison Chapter welcomes Carol Segree, of Gambrills, MD, as a new member and looks forward to interesting activities in 2019.

## Louisiana Chapter

*Allen Owings—President*

The Louisiana Chapter is busy planning activities for 2019. We will have an afternoon BBQ picnic at the LSU AgCenter's Hammond Research Station, Hammond, LA on Sunday March 31st. The Margie Jenkins Azalea Garden should be in nice spring bloom then.

Congratulations to long time members Flo and Larry Brown of the Louisiana Chapter on their recent 60th wedding anniversary.

The Louisiana Chapter recently donated \$500 to the LSU AgCenter and \$500 to the Azalea Society of America general funds from our treasury. The Louisiana Chapter also sponsored a table at the 9th annual fund raising gala for the Louisiana Nursery and Landscape Foundation for Scholarship and Research last summer. This year's event will be held at City Park in New Orleans in June.

Congratulations also go to Buddy Lee, who was awarded the 2018 Sidney B. Meadows Award by the International Plant Propagators Southern Region. [Photo 1] This award is the highest honor bestowed upon a Southern Region member. It recognizes outstanding individuals for their contributions to the nursery industry and to plant propagation in the Southern Region of the North America. In describing this award to Buddy on the IPPS website, they described him as "...one

▼ Photo 1— Buddy Lee was awarded the IPPS (International Plant Propagators Society) Southern Region Sidney B. Meadows Award at the IPPS 2019 meeting in Chattanooga, TN. Presented by Laura Miller.



of the most respected plant breeders and horticulturists in North America.”

The chapter welcomes new members Jeff Keuhnny and Kenneth Owens, of Baton Rouge, LA, and Roy Joseph Barrios, Jr. of Hammond, LA.

In closing, be sure to check out information on Lafayette, LA’s History Azalea Trail. Lafayette has been an ASA Azalea City since 2016. See more at <https://azaleatrail.org/>

## Northern Virginia Chapter

*Barry Sperling—Corresponding Secretary*

The strength of the Northern VA Chapter is in its volunteers. Many show up at each meeting, bringing food, setting up plants for sales and exchanges, setting up and breaking down the furniture, and keeping the AV support moving smoothly. If you want to see a list of these volunteers, look at our membership roster as everyone pitches in when the need arises. Thanks to everyone!

The Holiday Social in December was hosted by Carolyn and Paul Beck and catered by those many volunteers. [Photos 2, 3] Re-elected at the business meeting were President Lars Larson, Secretary Joanne Neckel, and Treasurer/Webmaster Paul Beck. Diane Marcus volunteered for the vacant Vice President’s job and was elected, also. We appreciate their giving their time for club duties. With the passage of the

budget, we continued donations toward the Friends of the National Arboretum, Friends of the Green Spring Title I Program, the Norfolk Botanical Garden, and the ASA General Fund. We are also supporting Meadowlark Gardens and their new Klimavicz Garden, to be installed this spring.

Prior to the Social, the October meeting featured famous speakers Rick Bauer and Don Hyatt, showing pictures from their spring tour in Europe. Don covered the ARS Bremen Convention and Rick the post-convention tour of Finland. All were amazing pictures!

Coming up in the spring will be the March meeting, garden tours, plant sales, and get togethers at conventions. We are looking forward to a year as great as 2018 was!

The chapter welcomes new member Ann B. Young, Williamsburg, VA.

## The Reverend John Drayton Chapter

The chapter continues to prepare to host the 2019 national ASA convention in Summerville, South Carolina. They also welcome new members Brenda Matthews and Shirah Goldweber, of Charleston, SC.

## Texas Chapter

*Caryl Hall—Secretary*

The chapter will have a booth at the Nacogdoches Farmer’s Market Spring Fling March 30th from 9 am to 2 pm. Members will be selling azaleas and educating the public about the ASA. The spring meeting will be April 13, 2019, with the time and place yet to be determined.

## Texas Forest Chapter

*Robert Thau—President*

The Texas Forest Country Chapter will be doing the first phase of planting at the Jasper Master Gardeners Arboretum on the 9th of March. We will be planting various azaleas not seen in our area before. We are in the planning stages for the three-phase Jasper city beautification project, which is due to start this year with planting at Sandy Creek Park. The chapter is still moving forward in signing up new members. We will be at our city’s annual Azalea Festival with a booth with azaleas to sell.

The chapter welcomes new members Amanda Haralson, Brookeland; Carol Broadway, Porter; and Nancy C. Windham, Lufkin, TX.

## Welcome, More New Members!

**Alabamense Chapter** welcomes new members Donald P. and Kimberly J. Widdon, Semmes, AL, and Suzanne M. Lai and Ulysses Yee, Huntsville, AL.

**Central Carolinas Chapter** welcomes new member Mary Griffin, Charlotte, NC.

**Vaseyi Chapter** welcomes new members Michael Bamford and Pim Rust, Atlanta, GA.

**Welcome new At-large Members** Barry Eisenberg, Metuchen, NJ; Carolyn Summers, Liberty, NY; Jennifer Pollard, Milledgeville, GA; Orphia Gibbs, Rogersville, TN; Richard Cushing, Reading, MA; Rosalea Daly, Redwood City, CA.



Photo Barry Sperling

▲ Photo 2— December 9 Holiday Party business meeting at home of Carolyn and Paul Beck.

▼ Photo 3—Holiday party group (l to r): Patsy Meadows, David Meadows, Pati Gabaldoni, Paul Davis, Rick Bauer.



Photo Fred Newlin

# Azalea Tasks for Spring

By Charlie Andrews—Cumming, Georgia

After the downtime of winter, we are usually eager to get back and spend more time in our gardens. Azaleas are pretty much low-maintenance plants, but here are five simple spring tasks to consider.

## Clean-Up

If you are like me, you sometimes let your garden go in late fall and winter. Spring is a good time to catch up. Consider weeding around your plants. Don't do a lot of digging and disturb the shallow roots. Add more soil if any roots are exposed, and mulch around the plants. I use pine straw, but there are other good mulches. Mulch holds moisture and keeps the soil around the roots loose. Be careful not to let the mulch actually touch the trunks at the root crown; leave a little air space. Now is a good time to check the condition of your plant labels. Move them (e.g., higher as the plant grows) or replace them as necessary.

## Prune

Azaleas generally do not need much pruning. Experts say the best time to prune is just after bloom. I say the best time is when you have pruners in your hand, and I almost always carry pruners with me. The problem with waiting for bloom is that could be from April to September, depending on the

species or cultivar. The only negative I see with pruning before bloom is you will lose seeing the flowers for that year on the cut stem. If possible, cut in time to allow flower bud set for next year. Without getting into too much detail here, prune to cut out dead wood, water sprouts, crossing branches, and excessively long growth. Pruning azaleas deserves an article of its own.

## Plant

In more northern locations where the ground freezes, spring is the best time to plant. In milder climates, fall is best because the roots can become well established before the hotter weather of summer hits. How one should plant depends on the soil. In my acidic clay, I plant all azaleas in 3-ft wide holes but dig only a shovel deep. I add 16 shovelfuls of pine bark fines to the soil and thoroughly mix, creating a mound 9-12 inches above ground level. Essentially, I am planting the azaleas above ground level in very loose soil that will absorb water easily but also drain well.

## Fertilize

Azaleas tolerate too little easier than too much fertilizer. One can correct iron, magnesium, or manganese chlorosis, but cannot easily cure toxicity from over fertilization. Some gardeners use slow-release fertilizers. I avoid the extra expense and fertilize with an ammonium-base fertilizer with micro nutrients twice a year (e.g., Agrium Super Rainbow 16-4-8), spring and late summer. Remember, less is better than more.

## Talk

Finally, walk through your garden, stop and really observe your plants. I talk to mine and tell them how beautiful they are, and observe their growth, and buds, flowers, stems, leaves. I take pictures, both landscape and close-up. My plants tell me when they are happy and when they are not happy. In my case, sadness usually has to do with lack of water, but it could be white flies, lace bugs, or a few azalea galls that need taking care of.



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