
THE AZALEAN

Journal of the Azalea Society of America

Volume 11 Number 1

March 1989



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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 the series *Azalea* (subgenus *Anthodendron*) of the genus *Rhododendron* in the Heath family (*Ericaceae*).

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THE AZALEAN

The Journal of the Azalea Society
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THANKS TO THE RETIRING EDITOR

Ryon Page

Various as President and as Chairman of the Board for most of the span during which Dr. Charles H. Evans refocused and steered *THE AZALEAN*, I have had a good point of vantage on his efforts in that capacity. We, Society members who have benefited, are greatly indebted to him for the application of his acumen and extensive experience toward a Journal of the quality that he has achieved.

Each of the past 24 issues represents numerous hours spent in planning and carrying out editorial practical tasks incident to publication. Apart from other content, promotion of advertisements toward financial support of the publication demanded an extensive personal effort.

In addition to the Editor's own time, there were supporters in the background who have put many, many hours into the preparation and processing operations.

For most of the span of his service, he and his support team followed through with the stuffing, sealing, and mailing of each issue, this in order to get *THE AZALEAN* to us on schedule. On more than one occasion I learned that "Nancy will be taking it to the Post Office tomorrow".

Having had a part in the stuffing and mailing operations since others took on those tasks, I can report that even that small portion of the whole has taken much more than a dozen man-hours per issue, more often twice that. While they worked quietly, I understand that the regular supporters included Nancy Evans, and William and Janet Miller.

I am confident that my own appreciation to Dr. Evans and to his primary team will be echoed by the rest of the membership. We can show this by support of *THE AZALEAN* in whatever ways we, as individuals, can.

EDITORIAL

Robert Hobbs
North Beach, Maryland

I begin my tenure as Editor of *THE AZALEAN* with a keen sense of the challenges ahead. Only with the help of each of you can I hope to meet these challenges. The challenges include:

- **Obtaining articles.** The backlog of original articles is zero. Submission of original articles is essentially nonexistent. There are some potential reprints from other journals on file and I have some promises for publishable material. If we are to continue to have a journal it is essential that you, the reader, and other azalea enthusiasts write articles and suggest interesting subjects to the Editor.
- **Rising costs.** Costs for producing *THE AZALEAN* are no exception to the general rise in prices. Your dues, which have been constant for several years, are almost completely used to produce *THE AZALEAN*. Production costs include typesetting, layout, printing, and postage. A major part of the work of producing *THE AZALEAN* (including all editorial work, proofing and mailing) is done on a volunteer basis. An additional problem is that the circulation of *THE AZALEAN* has remained constant for several years. Thus, we are not achieving the increased economy of scale which would undoubtedly occur if circulation (i.e., membership) were to increase. Potential remedies for rising costs include achieving a higher circulation (increased membership), reducing production costs (decreasing the number of pages per issue, decreasing the quality of paper, decreasing the quality of printing, for example) or increasing voluntary participation (is there

a member who has access to typesetting or printing equipment?).

- **Enhancing Value to Readers.** Maintaining high standards in the technical content of *THE AZALEAN* and including color photographs are important goals. We will be making plans to do so, but including color photographs just adds to the problem of rising costs.

To begin meeting these challenges, some changes will be taking place. Each technical article in this issue has been reviewed by an expert outside reviewer, a practice which we will follow in the future. You may notice some differences in the printing and layout of this issue and perhaps a reduced number of pages, changes which were introduced in order to save costs. You will also notice an increased emphasis on chapter and society activities; this change is introduced in the hopes of stimulating membership expansion through increased chapter activity.

These changes only begin to address the challenges. Please help by contributing articles and encouraging others to do so. Promote membership to your colleagues, friends, and neighbors who are interested in azaleas. Above all let me know your ideas.

THE AZALEAN exists to disseminate information about the world of azaleas to interested gardeners and horticulturists. You, the members of the Azalea Society of America, are a unique source of this information. Share your experiences and findings with others! Your contributions are essential.

NOTES ON AZALEAS IN A WASHINGTON SUBURB

RYON PAGE
SILVER SPRING, MARYLAND

Over the past 15 years I have grown, or attempted to grow, several hundred different evergreen azaleas. In addition, I have seen many other cultivars in plantings elsewhere in the area. My observations—based on both successes and failures—may be of interest to the ‘pros’, but are directed mainly to helping the tyro to attain more quickly the benefits of gardening with azaleas.

These notes are from one who normally is less than systematic at record keeping. As a result, they come primarily from memory. The present purpose is to report on the behavior of some azaleas that have stood out either because they proved to be marginal or unsuitable for my back yard or because they have performed unusually well here. The rest will receive little or no mention. It is important to note that bud-hardiness, in particular, depends on the microclimate in which a plant is grown. Several of the plants that have been marginal performers in my garden are reportedly satisfactory elsewhere in the Washington area.

The Habitat

Locale—A mile north or the northern tip of the District of Columbia and half a mile outside the Washington, D.C. Beltway; Zone 7A.

Situation—A small lot, about 1/7th acre, crowded with azaleas. Of those growing in the ground, possibly a hundred are twelve to thirty years old, another 250 are between the ages of five and twelve years old, and the rest are younger. Some 150 plants growing outside in pots range in age from five years down to those which went into the greenhouse last summer as cuttings. Plants are mulched lightly at all times, given light feedings in the spring, and watered reasonably well during dry periods.

Exposure—The house faces northeast, with beds of azaleas for foundation plantings. The great majority are in the open yard, and prevailing winter winds are from the southwest, with little or no wind protection for plants on that side of the lot.

Some Marginal Performers

‘George Lindley Tabor’, Southern Indian—One mature plant in the front yard, partially shaded by a dogwood tree and shielded from the winds to some degree by other azaleas, produces some bloom almost every year. In two recent seasons there were blooms only on branches which had been covered by snow during periods of severe weather. In the back yard another plant, growing on the east side of a tree trunk and protected slightly by other azaleas, blooms well about one year out of two. Still another ‘copy’, which was fully exposed to the wind, performed so poorly that I eventually sent it to a milder climate.

‘Anthenon’ (syn. ‘Lady Edith’), Southern Indian—This one was acquired with advance knowledge that it was at best marginally hardy here. With a daughter named

Edith, I had to try! Half a dozen years ago it was put under an older and larger plant, against the east foundation in high shade. It bloomed lightly for the first three or four years, but has been so deeply shaded since as to have little chance of setting buds. In any case, the experiment has provided enough fun to make it worth the trouble. I assume that it would not bloom, and might not survive, in a more exposed location.

‘Helen Fox’, Glenn Dale—This azalea has lingered in the yard, barely surviving, for some twenty years. I keep it because of its unusual bloom, similar to that of ‘Surprise’. Of my two current plants, neither more than knee high, each regularly loses some of its branches during the winter, and each shows half a dozen or so blooms in the spring. One of these days during a clean-up, those plants will be discarded.

‘Glacier’, Glenn Dale—Growing under a dogwood tree, with only slight protection from winter winds, my plant performed well until the winter of 1981. Since then it has had hardly a year with heavy bloom, though the foliage has survived well enough. At Brookside Gardens, only three miles away but in a colder microclimate, the ‘Glacier’ planting, five specimens, suffered so badly that they have been removed and replaced.

‘Koromo Shikibu’, Kurume—A mature plant in a spot protected from the wind by other plants has bloomed fairly well. Another, exposed to the wind, suffered badly in the winter of 1981, and died about two years later.

‘Frosted Orange’, Harris—This small plant, grown in full sun and in admittedly poor soil, seldom shows more than 20% bloom for me. That may not be its typical performance.

‘Hiawatha’, Pericat—Shaded by a dogwood tree and protected on three sides by taller azaleas, this cultivar blooms following the milder winters.

‘Pride of Lawrenceville’, Harris—In a two-gallon pot, and above ground but with some shielding from the wind, the plant itself suffered from the winters and eventually died. A cutting from it, in the ground for the past three years, looks healthy.

‘Pericat White’, Pericat—This plant, some 25 years in my yard, had bloomed fairly faithfully through 1980. The winter of 1981 killed most of its foliage; and though the plant itself has recovered, it has produced only an occasional handful of blossoms since. I keep it for the foliage, a bright green.

‘Sweetheart Supreme’, Pericat—My plant came as a gift from a friend; it would not bloom in his plot ten miles to the north. Here it bloomed nicely for a couple of years, then more and more sparsely. The plant itself has suffered from the winters of the 1980’s. Gradually it became a lost cause.

Nuccio’s ‘Blue Moon’—One of the Brookside Gardens Chapter test clones. The plant is decidedly marginal for the Washington area. Nevertheless, it has become some-

thing of a favorite with me. At this point there are about five plants, none more than six inches high, in my backyard beds. One has bloomed for the past two years, and another did fairly well in 1988. Except for its distinctive foliage and unusual, bluish-tinged blossom, this cultivar would have been put aside quickly. It makes an interesting experiment.

Back Acres Azaleas

About a dozen cultivars in this series, planted in a lightly shaded bed but with little protection from wind, performed so poorly for two or three of the past seven years that I became discouraged and stopped propagating them. However, several plants in this group made a partial come-back for 1988, showing some of their old beauty.

Satsuki Azaleas

In the absence of written records, and because of a practice of paying too little attention to their individual names, I will make no attempt to single out Satsuki clones for their performance. It has been easier to acquire small plants or cuttings without concern as to hardiness, and to accept losses of the less sturdy ones, than to choose for hardiness in the beginning.

Superior Performers

On the upper end of the scale, a number of clones stand out for having weathered our recent severe winters,

producing good bloom despite adversity. Notable among these are 'Louise Gable', 'Good Times', 'Stewartstonian', and 'Elsie Lee'. Whether from some peculiarity in growing conditions or from their innate hardiness, these bloomed well through all the difficult years, with the plants maintaining good appearance.

In the Middle

While there is a hint of unfairness in comparisons in which most of the "contestants" remain unnamed, we may ease that problem by indicating the range of plants observed at one time or another over the past seven years. The plants, mostly small ones, included:

- A dozen Gables
- Half a dozen Girards
- 220 Glenn Dales
- A dozen Harris
- Four named Kehr hybrids
- A dozen Linwoods
- Half a dozen Penningtons
- About 15 North Tisbury
- Two dozen Robin Hills/Gartrells
- Half a dozen Shammarellos

Other than as indicated, the rest that I tried have performed well. An exception for nearly all, of course, was the year when a warm spell, followed by a freeze, killed a large proportion of the buds on nearly all varieties.

THE GLENN DALE COLLECTION OF GHENT AZALEAS—PART I

Edward D. Rothe
Gambrills, Maryland

The collection and hybridization of native North American, eastern European and Asian deciduous azalea species by European plant explorers and nurserymen in the 18th and 19th centuries is discussed by Lee, Galle, Skinner, and Cash (1, 2, 3, 4). Although the history is complex and still not completely clear in many respects, we know that much of the early breeding was done in gardens and nurseries in the vicinity of the city of Ghent, Belgium, at least as far back as the early 1800's. Consequently, these first generation hybrids came to be known as the Ghent azaleas.

It is believed that, at least in part due to the interest of B. Y. Morrison, many azalea species and hybrid cultivars (both deciduous and evergreen) were introduced into the USDA Plant Introduction Station at Glenn Dale, Maryland, during the first part of this century. As near as we can tell, sometime in the mid-1930's a large collection of the Ghent and related deciduous hybrids were imported to Glenn Dale as part of those acquisition and subsequently included in what was then called Plot 7 of the woods rhododendron planting.

What remains of this planting is now being inventoried and, to the extent possible, restored as part of the activi-

ties of the Glenn Dale Preservation Project of the Azalea Society of America (5). Plot 7, rows 1 through 12 were planted with approximately 344 specimens representing 120 cultivars. Besides those listed as Ghents there were 30 Mollis hybrids, seven Rustica Flore Pleno hybrids, five Occidentale hybrids and several cultivars not listed in Lee or Galle. At last count approximately 117 plants representing 55 cultivars have survived. With few exceptions, virtually all of the survivors so far identified seem to be of the Ghent group. In addition to this collection of hybrids, rows 13 through 19, as well as several other locations scattered throughout the woods planting, were planted with a number of North American and Asian native species. These, however, have not yet been inventoried, nor in many cases even identified.

At first hearing of the ASA Glenn Dale Preservation Project from Frank White, I learned of this collection and some of its history. Being somewhat of a history buff as well as a plant lover, I found the story quite interesting, but it was not until reading the Skinner article referenced above that the possible significance of this collection was brought home to me. It was then that I realized that many of the specimens at Glenn Dale may well be very rare—if

not unique—and was motivated to undertake the very needed restoration of the planting. At about the time that this work was getting started, Bill Miller provided a copy of an old ledger which he had discovered in the Station's records. This ledger contained two early inventories of the Ghent collection and has proven invaluable to the job of reconstructing and mapping the original planting, as well as inventorying the survivors and attempting the identification of those plants whose original labels are missing.

Because most of the surviving plants had grown to a height of 10 to 12 or more feet, pruning was clearly needed. The removal of a portion of the large old canes each year has resulted in a good deal of vigorous new growth, much of which is now several feet tall and in many cases also well budded. Since a substantial number of the plants seemed to be barely surviving, the sweet gums, tulip trees, and smaller oaks which had grown up among them in the intervening years were felled or girdled to allow in much needed sunlight.

It is clear that these plants had received little attention for many, many, years (probably since 1945, the year of the last inventory recorded in the ledger). In consequence of this, one might feel justified in concluding that the cultivars surviving (at least the large healthy ones which are in the majority) are especially well adapted to local growing conditions and climate, and thus might be well worth growing in this region. Although these early generation hybrids are not nearly as flamboyant in bloom as their descendants, the Knap Hills, Exburys, etc., they possess an old fashioned charm when in bloom which I find difficult to resist. It is equally difficult for me to believe they they would not be popular if more widely known and available.

Inventorying and restoring of this collection (including the identification of unlabeled plants) is far from being completed, and the following results should be taken as preliminary. The 55 surviving cultivars break down as follows: 42 Ghents, two Mollis, two Rustica Flore-Plenos, and nine for which the hybrid group is unidentified. Since the preponderance of survivors are in the Ghent group, I have taken the liberty of lumping the "unknowns" in with them for statistical purposes. With this assumption, we have approximately 43% of the Ghent hybrids and 7% of the Mollis hybrids among the original planting surviving to this day. (I do not feel that the two surviving Rustica Flore-Plenos out of the original seven represent a statistically meaningful sample.) For what it's worth, this crude analysis tends to support the conventional wisdom with respect to the viability of the Mollis hybrids in this area. A list of the surviving cultivars is presented in Table I. Names in Table I are given exactly as they appear on the labels at Glenn Dale. These names in several cases are slightly different from what would appear to be the corresponding names in Lee (1), Galle (2) or Wilson and Rehder (6).

TABLE I

GHENT	
Agathe	Joseph Bauman
Ariel	Joséphine Klinger
Beaute Celeste	Julius Caesar
Boquet de Flora	Julie Dupont
Coccinea Grandiflora	Laelia
Coccinea Speciosa	Louise Hellebuick
Crimson King	Mrs. H. White
Cuprea Ardens	Narcissiflora Plena
Cuprea Pulchella	Nivalis
Cymodocee	Nosegay
Decorator	Oscar I
Decus	Prince Henri des Pays-Bas
Delicata	Queen of England
Electra	Reine des Rouges
Emile	Richardissima
Emma	Sang de Gendbrugge
General Chasse	Standishii
Gloria Mundi	Sully
Graf Alfred von Niepperg	Variegata
Heronine Plena	Vulcan
Hortonum Pucella	Versicolor
MOLLIS	
Esmeralda	Mrs. L. J. Endtz
RUSTICA FLORE-PLENO	
Garten Inspector Ohrt	Norma
HYBRID GROUP UNIDENTIFIED	
Amabilis	General Trauff
Coccinea Major	La Surprise
Cuprea Splendens	Rosea Flava
Favorita	Semiramis
Fulgida	

I wish to thank Dr. Bruce Parlman, the Glenn Dale Plant Introduction Station Location Leader, and also Roger Brown, Andy Dietz, Bill Miller and Frank White for their assistance, advice and encouragement in these efforts.

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REPORT ON DELMARVA - BEN MORRISON CHAPTERS REGIONAL MEETING

Robert Hobbs
North Beach, Maryland

The Delmarva and Ben Morrison Chapters sponsored a two-day regional meeting at the Rehoboth Art League in Henlopen Acres, Delaware on October 8-9, 1988. The meeting, which was hosted by the Delmarva Chapter, featured three excellent speakers, plant sales, an awards ceremony and much opportunity for informal discussions and socializing. Forty-seven participants registered for the meeting.

Ed Collins, Past President of the Pine Barrens Chapter of the American Rhododendron Society, described the rhododendrons growing at Heritage Plantation, located on Cape Cod, near Sandwich, Massachusetts. Heritage Plantation is the 75-acre former home of Charles Dexter.

Mr. Dexter, who retired to Heritage Plantation in 1921, grew many seedlings some of which he grew on and some of which were distributed before blooming. By the time of his death in 1943, he had assembled a collection of beautiful plants at Heritage Plantation which were obviously hardy in the Northeast. Dexter named 60 or so cultivars; Mr. Collins described his own work in studying and maintaining the identification of Dexter's hybrids at Heritage Plantation (as well as hybrids produced by Jack Cowles as an extension of Dexter's work) through excellent photography and careful documentation.



Speaker Ed Collins (left) and Weldon Delp (right)



Delmarva Chapter President Gordon Severe (left) and Ben Morrison Chapter President Ed Rothe (right)

Mr. Weldon Delp made two presentations, first a description of methods he uses to bring seedlings into bloom rapidly after sowing the seed, and second a description of the hybridization activities that he has been carrying out for the past 40 years. Mr. Delp does this work in Harrisville, Pennsylvania where winter temperatures of below -25°F are possible. His main objective is to combine the desirable traits of Asiatic species with hardier plants in order to improve the character of cultivars suitable for cold areas in the U.S. He grows over 5,000 seedlings annually, representing as many as 200 crosses. His interests range from deciduous azaleas to lepidote and elepidote rhododendrons.

To accelerate the process of selection of desirable cultivars, Mr. Delp has developed techniques for bringing azalea and rhododendron plants into bloom 18 months after sowing the seed. This process includes artificially producing growth—dormancy cycles by controlling temperature and simulating long days during growth by extended periods of artificial lighting. Photographs of many of Delp's best hybrids were shown.

Mr. Tony Dove, Horticulturist at the London Town Publik House and Gardens in Edgewater, Maryland described the many flowering trees, shrubs, and ground covers that are used there. London Town House and Gardens features azaleas, of course, but in the context of a total, year-round garden, many other plants have been integrated into the displays (see the article by Mr. Dove in this issue). Mr. Dove described his methods of reclaiming soil from native undergrowth to prepare for plantings of display plants. Natural contours are typically preserved, and soil is amended with copious amounts of leaves rototilled into the original soil. Gypsum is added to improve soil structure before planting takes place. Photographs of many flowering trees and shrubs at various blooming times were presented, and the extensive use of ground covers was illustrated.



Tony Dove, Horticulturist at London Town Publik House and Gardens

The Delmarva and Ben Morrison Chapters took the opportunity to honor several members for their contributions to their chapters, and to the azalea community.

Nels Nelson of the Delmarva Chapter was recognized for his hybridization activities and the resulting "First State" hybrids. Delmarva Chapter President, Gordon Severe presented him with a plaque from the chapter, and letters of commendation from the Governor of Delaware, and the President of the United States!

Ben Morrison Chapter President Ed Rothe presented Frank White, Margaret Church and George and Sue Switzer with distinguished service awards plaques from the Ben Morrison Chapter.

Congratulations to all.



George and Sue Switzer (left) receive Ben Morrison Chapter Commendation from Ed Rothe

1989 ASA ANNUAL MEETING AND CONVENTION

Malcolm Clark
Hendersonville, North Carolina

The Eleventh Annual Meeting and Convention will be held May 20 and 21, 1989 in Hendersonville, North Carolina at the Kanuga Conference Center. This will be a rather different and interesting convention in several regards. First and foremost is the Kanuga Center itself—an Episcopal retreat in a wilderness setting of great beauty. Hiking trails abound, swimming and tennis is available for those so inclined; a modern lodge overlooks a 30-acre lake, and the food is superb. Kanuga is so wonderfully peaceful that your experience of it will not be interrupted by an bus trips. Since we will not be going anywhere, an extensive display of later blooming azaleas will be brought in from lower elevations. Thus, "a late show". (Many of these exhibition plants will be included in a plant sale offering several hundred varieties.) Sunday morning will be different, too, for it will be devoted to much needed work sessions of the various committees as well as the Board of Governors itself.

Not to worry! Your convention expectations have not been entirely cast aside, for we are honored to have Dr. John Creech, Director Emeritus, US National Arboretum, as our keynote speaker Saturday evening. John will have just returned from the International Azalea Conference in Japan and will give us a report on that historic gathering, replete with slides. Sunday lunch will feature Mary and/or Jeff Beasley on our native azaleas. The Beasleys, of course, have few peers in this realm. Our speaker on Sunday evening will be James Harris, certainly one of the premier contemporary American hybridizers. The

agenda for Sunday afternoon is not yet complete, but with Drs. Kehr and Creech on hand, as well as Mr. Harris and the Beasleys, it seems a rare opportunity for a breeder's roundtable. We expect to pull this off.

Finally, some mechanics. Registration will open Saturday at 2:00PM, but your rooms will not be ready until around 4:00PM. Exhibitions and the plant sale will be open throughout the convention. The Saturday banquet dinner will be served at 6:30PM, followed by Dr. Creech's address and the Annual Meeting. Meals on Sunday will be served at 8:00AM, 12:30PM and 6:00PM, with programs as outlined above. On Monday, breakfast will be served at 7:30AM so you can get away reasonably early. The total cost for two night's lodging, five meals and registration will be \$110.00 per person—a bargain we believe. A registration form is enclosed with this *AZALEAN*. Registrants will receive a convention packet containing travel information and the like. Come to Kanuga. You'll love it!

A footnote on the obvious omission of the magnificent Biltmore Estate from the agenda. There are several reasons for this: (1) High season in the gardens is late April/early May when there is neither room at the inn nor Dr. Creech (and others) in Hendersonville, (2) including the bus trip to and from would consume another day and, again, there is no room at the inn, and (3) conventioners can tour Biltmore more cheaply and efficiently on their own, and are encouraged to do so. We stand ready to help as needed.

MULCH DAMAGE

Stanton Gill
Area Specialist, Commercial Horticulture
University of Maryland
Central Maryland Experimental Farm
4254 Folly Quarter Road
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Three reported cases of burning of plants and/or turf after mulch applications made to landscape beds were received last spring. The damage is from alcohol leaching from the mulch. You may ask, "How does alcohol show up in wood mulch?"

Alcohol can form in any decomposing organic materials under anaerobic conditions. Making mountains of bark mulch or compost to conserve space or to impress your competitor can result in the formation of wood alcohol in the middle bottom of the pile especially during a rainy period. In addition to forming alcohol, the pH of the bark mulch or compost will drop to near 3.0 further compounding the problem. If your intent is to generate alcohol, I suggest you choose more efficient methods, but if your intent is to store compost or bark mulch, it is best to either make the piles smaller or provide aeration to keep the decomposition aerobic.

Alcohol injury to actively growing plants is almost instantaneous. Nurserymen applying alcohol saturated mulch to established landscape plantings have reported patches of grass turning white within hours after being mulched with alcohol laden bark or compost. In this particular instance, the alcohol not only draws water out of the soil but also from plant tissues. After symptoms have been observed, it is generally too late to reverse the

process. Once plant cells have plasmolysed, (collapsed) they will generally stop functioning. Plants with dead roots don't grow.

To prevent alcohol from forming in piles of bark mulch or compost, avoid stockpiling the mulch for prolonged periods of time, in piles more than 8' to 10' high and 12' to 14' across at the base. For piles larger than those specified, be prepared to turn the piles bi-weekly with a front end loader or lay perforated 4" drainage pipe through the pile at 4' intervals. It is important to keep the piles aerobic by supplying oxygen to organisms doing the composting. It is also equally important to stockpile the mulch or compost in a well drained area to prevent the accumulation of water in the bottom of the pile.

Should a pile of bark mulch or compost become saturated with alcohol, spread the materials in a layer 10" to 12" thick and allow the alcohol to evaporate. Running a cultivator through the mulch or compost will hasten evaporation of the alcohol. After all of the alcohol has evaporated, mix the mulch or compost with new material at equal parts by volume and pile as recommended to reactivate composting. This will be necessary in order to raise the pH of the finished compost to a desirable level.

COMPANION PLANTS FOR AZALEA GARDENS

Tony Dove
Edgewater, Maryland

I have one advantage in writing for this journal; namely, that everyone reading this article loves plants, azaleas in particular. Azaleas certainly are among the most beautiful of all plants while in flower. Unfortunately, most azaleas flower only during a period of a few weeks in the Spring. If the landscape is to keep much of its appeal, a diversified planting is a must. The diversity of plants must provide interest and beauty throughout the year. Each season provides a varied list of plant species and varieties for enhancing the landscape.

We all want our azaleas to thrive happily and bloom more profusely each year. Unfortunately, in many cases azaleas do not perform as we may wish. Poor choices in varieties, insect and disease attack, poor culture, soil or water conditions are the usual reasons to which

undesirable growth is attributed. In many cases, however, the reason lies not so much in the azalea variety selected as in companion plants growing close to our azaleas. In this and future issues of *THE AZALEAN*, my goal is to introduce you to companion plants that will enhance the beauty of your plantings without causing harm to your azaleas.

Perhaps no season offers more subtle beauty than winter. Azaleas, whether evergreen or deciduous, hold their place as candidates for the winter garden. Evergreen varieties offer a myriad of foliage colors. Deciduous types will offer intricate branch structures displayed to their fullest advantage after a snowfall. There are many different plants that brighten the short days of winter. Some of these plants take on a different hue when high-

lighted by the low angle of the sun. Many of the companion plants offer evergreen foliage, exfoliating bark, fruit, and even flowers that enhance the winter scene.

Several species of the very ornamental *Stewartia* genus provide beauty throughout the year. During the winter months, most show attractive peeling bark of various shades of gray or reddish brown. White or light pink flowers appear during May, June, or July depending on the species and location. Each autumn, vibrant foliage adorns most varieties. *Stewartias* have a reputation of being difficult to transplant. However, I have found this not to be the case when providing partial shade from larger trees and an organic soil. Some of the more ornamental *Stewartias* are: *S. pseudocamellia*, *S. pseudocamellia* 'Korean Splendor', *S. sinensis*, *S. serrata*, *S. monadelpha*, and *S. x Henryi*. All of the above mentioned species are small trees of about fifteen- to twenty-feet in height.

Most people know the native Flowering Dogwood, *Cornus florida*. However, only a few gardens contain other members of this ornamental genus. Several species are very attractive when used for winter displays. The Red-Twig and Yellow-Twig Dogwoods (*C. sericea* and *C. sericea* 'Flaviramea', respectively) make a colorful scene when planted in groups. During the summer the twigs on both are a dull green. In winter the green changes to bright red or yellow. Pruning back branches two years old or older enhances the effect. This severe cutting back also keeps the plants under control. *Cornus kousa*, the Chinese Dogwood, provides interesting exfoliating bark, late spring flowers, and vibrant fall foliage colors. It is also more tolerant of heat and cold than our native dogwood. Resistance to dogwood borers is an added advantage. The Cornelian Cherry, *Cornus mas*, and its Asian, more tree-like relative *C. officinalis*, likewise have ornamental bark. Depending on climate, they produce clusters of small yellow flowers in late winter or very early spring.

The culture of *Daphnes* is confusing to amateur and professional alike. It is as likely that one gardening book will recommend alkaline soil as that another will state acid soils are a must. I have grown many species and varieties of *Daphne* over the years. In most cases, they thrive

in exactly the same condition as azaleas. Winter shade, organic rich soil, and good drainage are essential. They must never dry out completely. I have one important cultural recommendation that rarely appears in journals. All *Daphnes* have a tendency to lean after a few years. The preference for leaning must matter to the *Daphnes*, for if they are staked upright they usually die. Therefore, my advice is to leave them alone. Do not use high nitrogen fertilizers on any species of *Daphne*.

Daphne odora 'Marginata', the Winter *Daphne*, produces its clusters of pink flowers in late January to February. The fragrance of the flowers is so intense that you need only to be within two-hundred feet to notice it. This is undoubtedly the most fragrant plant in my garden. The foliage is evergreen, long and narrow. It is glossy green with a thin margining of ivory. I have read articles of this plant growing in Connecticut, but I fear that southern Maryland is about as far north that one can expect success. After ten years, a plant in my garden is three feet tall and broad, forming an almost perfect sphere. *D. mezereum* is a deciduous shrub producing fragrant winter flowers. Although much hardier to cold (it is naturalized on the coast of Maine), *D. mezereum* is difficult in warm climate. The white-flowered form, *D. mezereum* 'Alba', is much more successful in warm, humid climates. *D. tangutica* and *D. retusa* are two evergreen species that thrive in woodland plantings. *D. cneorum*, the Garland Flower, is very happy in New England climates, but fails in warmer areas. The cultivar 'Eximia' is much more successful. Both the species and the variety of *D. cneorum* live longer with the branches pegged down to the soil and allowed to root. All *Daphnes* are very poisonous in all their parts. Be especially careful to remove all berries before they ripen. The bright yellows and reds of the fruit may attract children.

The *Daphnes* do not have a monopoly on winter-flower fragrance. The Witch-Hazels, *Hamamelis* spp., offer a rich, spicy aroma as well as attractive flowers during the cold months. Most are hardy and tolerant of diverse cultural conditions. *H. mollis*, the Chinese Witch-Hazel, *H. vernalis*, the Vernal Witch-Hazel, and *H. x intermedia* are spectacular for their beauty and fragrance.

*Submit
Articles for Publication to:*

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PHONE: (301) 855-5269

A SIMPLE STRUCTURE FOR OVERWINTERING CONTAINERS

George S. Switzer
Prince Frederick, MD

Widely used in the nursery industry for overwintering container stock are "hoop houses", so called because of the shape of the metal framework. The houses are unheated. Containers are placed on the ground and the house covered with white plastic*. White must be used rather than clear to minimize day- to nighttime temperature fluctuation. These commercial greenhouses are generally too costly and too large for the hobby grower.

Pictured here is a simple, inexpensive structure that can be designed to fit any space or need. The dimensions of the one shown are:

Width 5'-0"
Length 18'
Ground to top of ridge 2'-6"

The wood frame is made of 2" x 6" treated lumber. The ridge and supports are of 2' x 4' lumber. The bows, or "hoops", 3/4" plastic pipe, on 30" centers.

The idea for construction of this "hoop house" is not original with me. It is adapted from one seen at Goodness Grows Nursery, 156 Woodlawn Drive, Crawford,

Georgia 30630. The management of the nursery has very kindly granted me permission to pass on their design on to readers of *THE AZALEAN*.

* Such as Monsanto GrowFilm 401 White Winter cover, 4 mil.



Simple hoop-house for overwintering container stock

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EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The Executive Committee has been meeting regularly to monitor operations of the Society, provide guidance to the President, and make recommendations to the Board of Governors. The committee is made up of the Chairman of the Board of Governors (Don Voss), the President (Bob Hobbs), the Vice-President (Bob Stelloh), the Secretary (Val Lorenz), the Treasurer (Glenn Taylor), and the immediate past president (Mal Clark). Meetings were held on June 12, July 31 and October 30, 1988 and February 12, 1989. The Society's operations, all of which are staffed by volunteers, include membership operations (dues collection, roster updating, new member packages), financial operations, mail operations (answering letters about the Society and cultural questions), sales of back issues of *THE AZALEAN*, and committee activities.

BOARD OF GOVERNORS MEETING

The Board of Governors met at London Town Publik House and Gardens in Edgewater, Maryland on October 30, 1988. The Board appointed Mr. Ed Rothe as Chairman of the new Publications Committee. This committee will develop a brochure for the general public describing selection and cultivation of azaleas. A new Membership Expansion Committee was established. Cochairpersons are Eleanor Stubbs for the West and Gordon Severe for the East. The Board also authorized the establishment of an annual award for "Best article in *THE AZALEAN*". A search for a sponsor for the award has begun. Draft by-laws for a proposed new chapter in Dallas, Texas, were distributed for review.

BROOKSIDE GARDENS CHAPTER

The Brookside Gardens Chapter annual meeting was held on Monday, December 12, 1988 at the Davis Library in Bethesda, Maryland. The featured speaker for the evening was chapter member Dave Wagner who presented a slide show of his 1986 Rhododendron Species Foundation—sponsored trip to China. In the open discussion that followed the presentation, Mr. Wagner told of his experiences with "back-lit" photography and of his interest in hybridizing

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for fall color. He remarked that people should be paying more attention to fall foliage color.

After the program, a slate of new chapter officers for 1989 was presented and accepted. Brian Barr was elected President, Reid Denis was elected Vice-President, Diane Gregg was elected Secretary and Dottie Murphree was elected Chapter Treasurer.

Denise Stelloh was presented the F. P. Lee Commendation for 1988 by Bill Miller, last year's recipient.



Denise Stelloh receiving F.P. Lee Commendation from Bill Miller

BEN MORRISON CHAPTER

The Ben Morrison Chapter held their annual cutting picnic in July. At that time officers for the 1988-89 year were elected. The new officers are: President—Ed Rothe, Vice-President—Bob Benbow, Secretary—Dale Flowers and Treasurer—Alan Jones. The Chapter is pleased to welcome eight new members.

On October 8 and 9 the fall joint meeting of the Delmarva and Ben Morrison Chapters was held at the Rehoboth Art League in Henlopen Acres, Delaware. Many of the members attended and enjoyed the weekend. The speakers were excellent, and we all had the chance to make new friendships and renew old ones. The Ben Morrison Chapter also recognized Frank White, Margaret Church, and George and Sue Switzer for their contributions to the chapter over the years. In December, the annual holiday pot luck dinner was held at the home of Bobby and Alan Jones.

The Ben Morrison Chapter Azalea Show (non-competitive) will be held this year on May 13 and 14, and

again at London Town Publik House and Gardens in Edgewater, Maryland.

DELMARVA CHAPTER

The Delmarva officers are: President—Gordon W. Severe; Vice-President—Dr. Cyril A. Schulman; Treasurer—William B. Holman, and Secretary—Carolyn Wright.

The Delmarva Chapter was host for the Ben Morrison-Delmarva Regional Meeting held on October 8-9, 1988. The Chapter's next project will be the installation of the Polly Hill Garden at the Rehoboth Art League. It will include examples of all of her azaleas.

The Chapter also has an extensive horticulture library donated by the late I. Lee Amann. Included are many fine reference materials, many now out of print. Mr. Amann also left us one of Ben Morrison's Christmas Cards. Mr. Morrison used linoleum blocks, and was as good an artist as horticulturist, perhaps could have been equally famous with his poignant treatment of wildflowers.

RICHMOND CHAPTER

The fall plant auction was again a huge success, and the Chapter extends its gratitude to Seth and Lisa Richardson of the Plant Man, who so generously donated all those beautiful plants—and Simone Schilling who brought plants she had propagated from her garden.

The Executive Committee met recently and developed plans for the coming year. Officers and Committee Chairmen for 1989 will be: President—Rosa Carter; Vice-President—Page Peyser, Secretary—Dorothy Robinson; Treasurer—Joe & Barbara McKeever; Librarian—Peggy Johnston; Historian—Elizabeth Carr; Propagation—Michael & Mary Jane Mitchell; Public Relations Joe McKeever; Membership—Paula Burnham and Garden Tours—Page Calisch.

NOMINATIONS FOR BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Five Governors will be elected at the 1989 Annual Meeting of the ASA on the evening of May 20, 1989 at Kanuga, Hendersonville, N.C. The nominating committee reported its recommendations to the Board of Governors at its October meeting. The Board unanimously approved and hereby submits to the membership the

following slate of nominees, each to serve for a term of two years:

Robert W. Hobbs, Ph.D.,
North Beach, Maryland

Current President of the Society and Editor of *THE AZALEAN*, Bob is Past-President of the Ben Morrison Chapter. See article elsewhere in this issue "Meet Your President and Vice-President".

Nels Nelson, Millsboro, Delaware
A founding member of the Delmarva Chapter, Nels is widely renowned as breeder, collector, wild plant hunter and master gardener. In every facet, Nels has few peers as an "azalean".

Ed Rothe, Gambrills, Maryland
Current President of the Ben Morrison Chapter, Ed is a communications engineer for NASA in Greenbelt, Maryland. Ed has done extensive work in identifying and restoring the deciduous azalea collection as part of the Glenn Dale Preservation Project.

Eleanor Stubbs, West Linn, Oregon
Currently an ASA governor, Eleanor is a founder and Past-President of the Northwest Chapter as well as a former Vice-President of the Society. A retired educator, she is co-operator of Stubbs Shrubs and bears the banner of azaleas up and down the west coast.

Glenn Taylor, Colonel, USMC Retired, Springfield, Virginia
Treasurer of the Society since 1984 and a sitting Governor, Glenn is also a charter member and former President of the Northern Virginia Chapter. As many know first hand, he has long and unselfishly served the wide ranging individual needs of members throughout the country.

Additional nominations may be made by petition from the membership. Such a petition is to be signed by at least twenty members and submitted to the Chairman of the Nominating Committee on or before May 1, 1989. (Recommendations for the "Class of 1990" are also solicited.)

GLENN DALE PRESERVATION PROJECT

William C. Miller, III

The Glenn Dale Preservation Project has survived another year, and I report this with considerable satisfaction as we move into the seventh year of the Azalea Society's oldest National Project. With the interest and untiring

support of people like Margaret Church of the Ben Morrison Chapter, progress, albeit slow, continues to be made in reclaiming the "wooded area". Officially, the station at Glenn Dale has been out of the azalea business for many years. One can well imagine the effort required to reverse the effect of many years of benign neglect. But, much dead wood was removed, many competing nuisance plants were cut back or removed, plant tags were found and reinforced, and plants were pruned to promote new growth. There is plenty yet to be done.

Our focus this past year was on the outer row of plants which consisted of plant material associated with Dr. John Creech's tenure at the station. Since many of these plants in the outer row still have their original tags, it is possible to accurately identify them and to learn more about them by tracking back through the station's records. For example, I have identified a series of hybrids which I believe to be sister seedlings to 'Mrs. LBJ'. In addition, there are several very fine forms of *Rhododendron kaempferi* in this area—which brings me to one of the major highlights of the year for the program. In September, I had the pleasure of assisting Dr. Creech in a survey project that he had undertaken to determine the status of collections of *R. kaempferi* in this country. With the permission of Dr. Parlman (Location Leader at Glenn Dale), I was able to send Dr. Creech a number of cuttings from the three *kaempferi* that I was able to find. Dr. Creech reported back that they were examples from three distinct localities, Kirishima, mid-Honshu, and southern Hokkaido.

The year was not without casualties. At the start of the project, one of the major subprograms was the development a germplasm resource area where complete collections of hybrid groups were to be maintained in the form of a cultivar repository. After seven years with continuing problems which ranged from 'industrial grade' weeds, extreme heat, and drought, to insuperable problems of a logistical nature, the decision was made this year to formally discontinue this aspect of the project in favor of refocusing our efforts and limited resources on the existing material in the wooded area. Of the more than several hundred plants that were

planted in the germplasm resource areas over the last seven years, fewer than ten survive today. I have notified Dr. Parlman of the decision and I expect that they will reclaim that area for their purposes in the near future. This is a positive change in direction which will permit us to invest our time and effort more effectively.

The Glenn Dale workdays for 1989 will all be Saturdays, as is our custom. The specific dates will be September 16th, October 21st, and November 18th. The hours will be from 9:00AM to 1:00PM, and workers should plan to bring gloves, loppers, shears, pitchforks, shovels, saws, axes, and enthusiasm. The work is not difficult and the fellowship is superb. Due to scheduling problems, there will not be a formal spring workday.

It should be remembered that the Plant Introduction Station at Glenn Dale, Maryland (or the National Plant Germplasm Quarantine Center as it is now called) is not an open federal facility; that is, people are not permitted general access. Permission must be obtained through either Roger Brown or myself (at least two weeks prior to the desired date) for access on other than scheduled workdays. This is as much a precaution for safety as anything else. For more information contact Roger Brown at (301) 577-7509 or me at (301) 530-7683.

MEET YOUR PRESIDENT AND VICE-PRESIDENT

President, Bob Hobbs, was born and raised in Chester, West Virginia. Bob's father struggled to keep a few azaleas alive in a garden of shade, and was rewarded by having a few plants of Gibraltar which performed reliably and a single plant of Amoena which after at least 40 years of care covered the front of their home.

Bob has worked at the U. S. Naval Research Laboratory, where he was the Head of the Millimeter-Wave Radio Astronomy Section and the NASA-Goddard Space Flight Center where he was Head of the Observatories and Data Analysis Branch of the Laboratory of Astronomy and Solar Physics. He has been an author on over 120 research papers in the field of astronomy. In 1982, Bob left the government to work in private industry. He is currently a computer system consultant and Manager of NASA

Projects with Computer Technology Associates, Inc. in Lanham, Maryland. Bob graduated in Physics from the Case Institute of Technology in Cleveland, Ohio in 1960. After receiving a Ph.D. in Astronomy from the University of Michigan, Bob moved to the Washington, D.C. area in 1964.

After a few trips to the National Arboretum and Frank White's Azalea Acres, another azalea collector was born. Bob and Bee moved to North Beach in southern Anne Arundel County, Maryland in the spring of 1981 where azalea collecting began in earnest. They have many small plants on their 1/3-acre property (100 or so varieties, and probably an equal number of different varieties in containers). Bob is a member and has been past president of the Ben Morrison Chapter of the ASA.

Bob has approximately 75 varieties of orchid plants in a small greenhouse. He is also a collector of antique keyboard instruments; any spare time left after work and pursuing horticultural interests is devoted to being a church organist, and maintaining two vintage pipe organs in their home.

Vice-President, Bob Stelloh, is a member of the Brookside Gardens Chapter along with his wife, Denise. Bob grew up in St. Louis, Missouri, and went to college at the Missouri School of Mines and Metallurgy in Rolla, Missouri where he received a MS degree in Mining Engineering in 1961. Before completing college, he spent three years as a surveyor in the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers, which gave him the opportunity to see much of the Far East—many of the islands of the Philippines, Okinawa, Japan, and Thailand. Although much of this work was out in the country, he unfortunately didn't know or care about azaleas, rhododendrons, or plants in general at that time, and missed a golden opportunity for plant exploration.

After college, Bob worked for Lockheed Missiles and Space Company in Sunnyvale, California for eight years, in the field of computer programming. In 1970, he moved to the Washington, D.C. area with his new bride, Denise, and co-founded a computer software

engineering company called International Computing Company. After ten years, the company was acquired by Continental Telephone Company. Bob now works as the Vice-President of their Network Management Center in Rockville, Maryland. This group develops, markets, and installs computer systems used to manage private telephone networks by large companies and by state and local governments.

Bob and Denise both became interested in azaleas soon after moving to Washington. It started with a chance visit to Lyons Nursery (now defunct) in Colesville, Maryland. Mr. Lyons was an azalea addict, and passed his enthusiasm on to them.

Azaleas are still their favorites in the plant kingdom, but the Stelloh's interests have expanded to include rhododendrons and companion plants, primarily wildflowers, maples and other ornamental trees, ornamental grasses, and they are just starting to learn about conifers. Bob and Denise are constantly being reminded of the first lesson they learned from Mr. Lyons, that plant people tend to be nice people. Last year they had a special opportunity to meet a lot of ASA members for the first time, since they were fortunate enough to have their garden on the ASA National Meeting garden tour. To those who came, they extend their thanks and an invitation to come back and see them again. Those who didn't make it are invited to come and see them when they are in the area—they would love to meet you, and to share their garden with you.

DOES ANYONE HAVE . . . ? DR. KEHR

Does anyone know where to find Belgian Indicas 'Niobe' and 'Madame Wibier'? If anyone has or knows of these plants, please contact Dr. August Kehr, 240 Tranquility Place, Hendersonville, NC 28739, PHONE: (704) 693-7551.

HELP WANTED—from Azalea Photographers

As spring approaches, azalea beds will attract, in addition to those who "ooh and aah", a substantial number who will point macro lenses, zoom lenses, or just plain lenses and snap, snap, snap. To those affected with the latter syndrome, the Slide Library Committee directs this plea: SNAP EXTRAS FOR THE LIBRARY!

The Society is trying to build up a library of high-quality slides from all major azalea groups, both evergreen and deciduous. Flower pictures are, of course, important. But we also need photographs that will illustrate other features that are diagnostic in plant identification (for example, close-ups of flower buds on the native deciduous species). Photographs that show the size and shape of mature plants, as well as their use in landscaping, are also needed.

Slides donated to the library should be clearly marked with the species or cultivar name (be sure you have the correct name for the plant), location and date, and (for close-ups) an indication of scale. The latter may be shown by an image-to-subject size ratio (1:5 or 1:10, for example) or by the inclusion of an inch or millimeter scale in the picture itself. Alternatively, the diameter of the open flowers may be measured when the picture is taken and then later noted on the slide.

Slides contributed to the library should be sent to:

(Mrs.) Joann Richiutti
5796 Western View Place
Mr. Airy, MD 21771
PHONE: (301) 831-7561

AZALEA CALENDAR

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| <p>April 3 Brookside Gardens Chapter Meeting. 7:30PM. Davis Library, Bethesda, MD. Speaker Dr. Joseph Higgins on the subject of improving plant photographs.</p> <p>April 9 The Richmond Chapter's buying trip to Lazy "S's" Farm in Barboursville, VA (located on south side of Route 33, 3 miles west of Route 20). Everyone is to meet at the nursery at 11:30AM.</p> <p>April 9 Northern Virginia Chapter Meeting at Fairfax County Extension Service, 1:30PM.</p> <p>May 5-7 Tenth Annual Brookside Gardens Chapter Azalea Flower Show at the Landon Azalea Festival, Landon School, Bethesda, MD. A standard azalea flower show with horticultural, artistic design, and educational exhibits. For information contact Denise Stelloh, Show Chairman, at (301) 840-1714.</p> <p>May 7 Richmond Chapter Garden Tours (to be announced).</p> <p>May 13 Eleventh Annual Brookside Gardens Chapter Azalea Mart. Location: Charles Woodward High School Parking Lot, Old Georgetown Road (MD Rt. 185) just north of the Interstate 270 Spur/Old Georgetown Road interchange. Time: 8:00AM-Noon. A wide variety of evergreen and deciduous azaleas in all sizes will be available.</p> <p>May 13-14 Azalea Show at London Town Publik House and Gardens, Edgewater, MD. This will be a non-competitive show, sponsored by the Ben Morrison Chapter. Beautiful flowers and horticultural exhibits are featured.</p> <p>May 13-14 The Delmarva Chapter Spring Plant Sale, 10:00AM-3:00PM both days at the Art League's Chambers Studio, Henlopen Acres, Delaware.</p> | <p>May 20-21 Azalea Society of America Annual Meeting will be held May 20-21 at the Kanuga Center, near Hendersonville, NC. Speakers, seminars, business meeting and election.</p> <p>June 25 Northern Virginia Chapter Meeting at Pimmit Library, 1:30PM.</p> <p>July 20 Richmond Chapter Meeting at 7:00PM at the General Fidelity Bank in Bon Air. Topic: "Newer Propagation Techniques", Speaker: Don Hager (formerly of Hager Nurseries).</p> <p>August 6 Northern Virginia Chapter Meeting at Pimmit Library, 1:30PM.</p> <p>Sept. 16 Glenn Dale Preservation Project Workday. 9:00AM 1:00PM. For directions and more information contact: Roger Brown at (301) 577-7509.</p> <p>Oct. 1 Northern Virginia Chapter Meeting at Pimmit Library, 1:30PM.</p> <p>Oct. 14-15 The Delmarva-Ben Morrison Regional Meeting, 9:30AM 4:00PM 10/14 and 9:30AM-Noon 10/15.</p> <p>Oct. 21 Glenn Dale Preservation Project Workday. 9:00AM 1:00PM. For directions and more information contact: Roger Brown at (301) 577-7509.</p> <p>Nov. 5 Annual Meeting and Plant Auction of Richmond Chapter at the Garden Center of Richmond Council of Garden Clubs, 4015 Hermitage Road at 5:00PM.</p> <p>Nov. 18 Glenn Dale Preservation Project Workday. 9:00AM 1:00PM. For directions and more information contact: Roger Brown at (301) 577-7509.</p> <p>Dec. 3 Northern Virginia Chapter Meeting at Pimmit Library, 1:30PM.</p> |
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