

Azalea

Journal of the Azalea Society of America



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Post Office Box 34536
West Bethesda, Maryland
20827-0536

On the Cover: *Rhododendron tashiroi* (Maximowicz)
Photographer: William C. Miller III
Bethesda, Maryland

Rhododendron tashiroi (Maximowicz)

This delightful deciduous azalea, called Sakuratsutsuji by the Japanese, is an early blooming harbinger of Spring. The range of this characteristically tall and somewhat twiggy azalea extends from the mountainous regions of southern Shikoku and Kyushu southward through the Ryukyu Island chain to Taiwan. The taxonomists assign *R. tashiroi* to the *Tashiroi* subseries which is said to be "monotypic" since *R. tashiroi* is the only member in the subseries.

The flowers, which precede the rhombic-shaped leaves, are bell shaped and funnel-form, averaging just over two inches across, are produced in pairs or groups of threes, and are described as "pale reddish purple with darker spots" by Galle.

Anything but commonplace, even in the hands of collectors in this country, this species was first introduced into the United States in 1955 by the Plant Introduction Section of the United States Department of Agriculture. While not appropriate for a small garden where the ultimate plant size may be a concern, this Japanese azalea species is worth serious consideration. □

Azalea Society of America

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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Associate Editor

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"Why Did My Plant Die?"

William C. Miller III

Bethesda, Maryland

From time to time, I receive phone calls from people who have questions about azaleas. A variety of questions are asked from the very general to the very specific, but some questions pop up with significant frequency. Therein lies, I believe, a tangible measure of the public information needs, and the ASA might consider this while structuring its efforts to develop materials for public education. The typical question usually involves some aspect of basic horticulture and is often precipitated by a negative experience; that is, an azalea did not perform as expected. One of my favorite questions is, "Why did my plant die?" It is often difficult to determine why a plant has died when you have it before you, but it is next to impossible to do a *post mortem* over the telephone. After explaining to the caller that I can only surmise what might have happened, I lead the caller through a "checklist" of possibilities to see if they might be guilty of any of the typical cultural errors—planting under a downspout, planting too low, over- or under-watering, too much fertilizer, pH problems, careless use of herbicides in the yard or in a neighboring yard, pet problems, unsuitable cultivar selection, and others.

Another one of my favorite questions is, "Why didn't my plant bloom?" Again, it is a guessing game and the same limitations apply as before. Poor blooming could be attributable to extreme weather events that occurred the previous fall, or to early springs with late freezes, or to something as basic and avoidable as the selection of inappropriate cultivars that are poorly suited for that region (e.g., insufficient cold hardiness). Again, a series of questions is useful in helping to determine a possible explanation. In cases where an otherwise healthy azalea has shown a trend of diminishing performance over a number of years, we sometimes conclude that neighboring plants, particularly those that comprise the canopy, might be permitting insufficient light (too shady a location). Azaleas do not bloom very well in the shade and this condition can develop gradually, with little warning, as yards mature. Sometimes, we discover that it was not a problem with the plant at all. People are usually very surprised to learn that when they trimmed or pruned their azaleas last September (much too late in the year) the flower buds were removed.

Perhaps the most difficult question that I am faced with regularly is "Which cultivars should I buy?" Apparently, many people are under the impression that azaleas are like some members of the plant kingdom where it is easy to identify a handful of current "best" cultivars. Unfortunately, it is not that simple with azaleas, because such consensus is not possible. Twelve "azalea experts" could conceivably give twelve different answers based on differing personal perspectives and preferences—and they would all be right. The answer to the question must be viewed in the context of the multiplicity of variables which combine to produce each cultivar. These variables include plant size and habit, flower and leaf characteristics (especially color), period of bloom, and geographic suitability. For example, the expert who has a modest New England urban yard and has a preference for low growing, compact plants may be high on North Tisbury hybrids (generally low growing to prostrate) but reluctant to include the Glenn Dale 'Martha Hitchcock' (renowned for its leggy habit) on his list of "Best." An expert from a southern or western region, with few space considerations, might prefer much larger plants, and his list might feature Southern Indian hybrids, Harris hybrids, and Glenn Dales while showing little interest in Satsukis (later blooming

and slower growing in some cases) and North Tisbury hybrids. In the area of cultivar selection, I believe generalization can serve a useful role. It is prudent to recommend cultivars on a hybrid group/origin basis. For example, the Robin Hill hybrids were developed in Wyckoff, New Jersey. It is reasonable that those cultivars, by their circumstances, would be well suited for anything that a comparable climate could throw at them—or they would not have survived the selection and subsequent informal post-introduction evaluation process. Having adopted that approach, it should be made clear, however, that many azaleas are highly adaptable and should not be automatically rejected on the basis of their respective origins alone. Time (experience) has shown us that many cultivars from distant regions are perfectly hardy in other places, so we should resist the temptation to be absolutely dogmatic.

Occasionally, people want to know where particular cultivars can be obtained. I have a sizable collection of catalogs, so it is not too difficult to direct callers to a number of potential sources. I should mention that I hold the advertisers in **THE AZALEAN** in special regard and recommend them whenever possible. Since I find myself functioning in a broker capacity, it would be in the best interest of the producers to keep me informed of what they have available. While the public has not completely gotten away from thinking in terms of buying "reds, whites, pinks, and purples," progress is being made in this area. Consumers are learning that their interests are best served when they take the time to do a little homework. This includes visiting local public gardens and attending azalea flower shows during the blooming season to assess the possibilities and to see which azaleas they find most appealing. With more well-written articles beginning to appear in the popular press, the buying public is beginning to understand that the azalea acquisition process does not have to be the total gamble that it used to be. □

Thoughts On Pruning Azaleas

Debby Emory

Silver Spring, Maryland

How much pruning an azalea undergoes can depend on the space available for the plant to grow, the vigor of the plant, and the inclination of the gardener. In public parks and large estates where plenty of space is available, plants can age gracefully and need only an occasional trimming of dead wood to be kept healthy and attractive. In smaller and more formal areas where azaleas have been planted closely, more intense pruning is needed to prevent the more vigorous plants from smothering others. Many azaleas are naturally bushy, compact shrubs and need very little pruning, especially when compared with other shrubs such as forsythia.

Probably the most frequent mistake made in planting azaleas is in spacing plants too close together. Nursery-grown plants in 2- or 3-gallon containers look great just as they are, so we often plant them for immediate effect. Within a few years they are fighting each other for space, and we then remove every other plant and replant it someplace else. But 10 to 20 years later we realize they're still too close together and they're now too big to move easily. THEN we have to prune.

Implements of pruning range from fingernails to power saws. Fingernails work well on fresh crisp growth in late summer and the gardener always has them on hand! A power saw may be required for the drastic pruning of an old plant. Hand pruners with either straight or curved edges are readily available and suitable for most requirements. Lopping shears will handle a thicker branch than hand shears and will also extend the gardener's reach to very high or very low branches. Unfortunately lopping shears do not readily fit in a pocket. Power hedge trimmers are enjoyed by men who like playing with power tools and they are quite useful in achieving a geometrical artificial look.

The routinely recommended time for pruning azaleas is immediately after blooming so that new growth will have plenty of time to form next year's buds. Early pruning is especially important for old, badly overgrown plants where drastic measures are required.

Plants that are grown in tight artificial forms such as gumdrops and topiaries are often sheared frequently and closely, so that they develop dense surface foliage with few leaves inside the plant. If a Mr. Scissorhands is too enthusiastic or too late in cutting off the vigorous new growth that develops in late summer, much of next spring's bloom will be lost.

Pruning at blooming time may be desirable for a plant that sports freely. The branches bearing the sports can then be identified, and the desired balance of sports (high, low, or zero) can be maintained. Pruning at blooming time also provides branches for flower shows and interior decoration. Most azalea growers are, however, apt to prune whenever the mood strikes them and to limit their cutting to plants that are growing over something else.

Winter pruning is seldom recommended, but it has many advantages. It does, of course, remove a lot of spring flowers, but established plants are generally so loaded with buds that quite a few branches can be removed without being noticed. Evergreen azaleas are not totally evergreen in the same sense as the evergreen hollies or rhododendrons. Instead they have two types of leaves. The spring leaves, which form about blooming time, are large and usually drop in

early winter. The summer leaves — located closer to the terminal bud — are smaller, more closely spaced on the stem, and remain all winter. After the new year, with the leaves thinned out, the branch structure of the plant becomes more apparent so that the gardener can more easily see where pruning is needed. On a mild winter day (when available) we often look for a chance to be outdoors. Furthermore, in the winter the gardener is much less likely to step on a snake or a nest of yellow-jackets.

The amount of pruning an individual plant needs varies considerably. A young plant may need nothing whatsoever for several years. An old plant with a lot of dead wood can be cut nearly to the ground and in time, recover nicely. When heavy pruning is needed, removal of all excess wood in one year may leave an unsightly space. It may be desirable to reach inside the bush and cut back to the desired level about a third of the branches each year for three years.

Young plants of *R. Kaempferi*, *R. vittata fortunei* and their hybrids which make loose but vigorous upright growth can be pruned frequently to encourage branching close to the ground. On the other hand, young plants of Satsuki hybrids often make dense, spreading growth close to the ground leading many gardeners to hope that they will always remain dwarf. The gardener should be aware however that vigorous upright growth can readily develop on older plants and must be kept pruned if it is desired to keep the plant low.

A bush looks better after pruning when the stems are cut low enough that the stumps are hidden by foliage. Most of the new growth on a plant forms as a cluster of three to seven stems, of which one or two are often very much longer than the others. Cutting the longest stems back to their bases is an easy way to keep a plant compact. It is also often wise to cut branches growing horizontally when they are likely to smother lower growth. Stems that have grown a foot or more in a season should also be cut back since future growth from

these stems will also be vigorous and overshadow other plants. Be alert to remove so-called "water sprouts," vertical shoots from the base of the plant that may grow two feet or more in height during the summer!

A massive planting of azaleas appears more natural when individual plants or groups of plants of one variety are trimmed so that they can be displayed separately rather than blending with other varieties into a hedge-like grouping. For best results it may be wise to prune lightly at first—then step back a ways and look the planting over critically before doing more.

A few last words of advice. Fertilizer can be a dangerous chemical around azaleas. Just as using fertilizer on grass results in the lawn having to be cut more often, so fertilizing azaleas more than may be needed to maintain them in heathy condition only means that they have to be pruned more often. Some use of chemicals in pruning may be desirable: plant diseases can be spread by your tools. Cleaning shears or saws frequently with rubbing alcohol or a 10% solution of Clorox in water is a wise precaution. And don't forget—before closing the shears always make sure where your fingers are!

□

Don't Name That Plant—Until You Have Read This Article !

Donald H. Voss
Vienna, Virginia

PART TWO

The second part of this article draws heavily on the Cultivated Code to address the questions: "What are cultivars?" and "How are cultivar names formed?" Discussion of the relevant code sections will be helpful not only to readers desiring to register cultivars but also to those who want to understand better the definitions and practices that lie behind many of the plant names they use every day.

What Are Cultivars? How Are Cultivar Names Formed?

These questions have been addressed authoritatively by an international organization, the International Commission for the Nomenclature of Cultivated Plants of the International Union of Biological Sciences. The commission includes representatives of academe and government in the fields of agriculture, forestry, and horticulture. The code promulgated by this group is known as the "Cultivated Code" and, to the extent practicable, follows principles set forth in the "Botanical Code," which governs nomenclature of botanical taxa (genera, species, subspecies, etc.). [1,2] The Cultivated Code provides a framework within which we can work toward rational, internationally acceptable naming of plants. The code cannot tell us whether a plant should be named—only a conservative approach to selection and naming (read: self-restraint by hybridizers, nurserymen, and collectors) can achieve that highly desirable end. Remember "Chinese" Wilson's concern quoted below the title of Part One of this article! (See Part One of this article in *THE AZALEAN*, March 1991 p. 5, ed.)

The Cultivated Code is comprehensive and deals with many topics in excruciating detail. Some of these, such as trademarks and legal restrictions in some countries, are not addressed here. Much of the Code is, however, directly relevant for one who plans to name a cultivar. While there is no compulsion to follow the rules, a person would do horticulture a great disservice by not following them. The welter of names in many genera (including *Rhododendron*) is bad enough already—we should not contribute to construction of a new Tower of Babel. To help readers of *THE AZALEAN* better understand nomenclatural practices, the author has summarized and excerpted portions of the Cultivated Code:

Cultivated plants are essential to civilization. It is important, therefore, that a precise, stable, and internationally accepted system should be available for their naming. (Article 1) The aim of the present Code (Cultivated Code) is to promote uniformity, accuracy, and fixity in the naming of agricultural, horticultural, and silvicultural cultivars . . . (Article 3) Registration of cultivar (variety) names is of the greatest importance for nomenclatural stability. . . . (Article 4)

Article 10.—The international term cultivar denotes an assemblage of cultivated plants which is clearly distinguished by any characters (morphological, physiological, cytological, chemical, or others), and which, when reproduced (sexually or asexually), retains its distinguishing characters. . . . This term [cultivar] is derived from cultivated variety . . .

Note 2. The concept of cultivar is essentially different from the concept of botanical variety, *varietas*. The latter is a category below that of species. . . .

Note 4. The terms cultivar and variety (in the sense of cultivated variety) are exact equivalents. . . .

In Article 11, the Code permits use of the term "cultivar" for plants derived by a number of reproductive strategies. In floriculture and agricultural seed crop production, for example, certain cultivars are reconstituted periodically by repeating the original cross. But because of the complexity of genetic background and strong propensity for genetic or somatic mutation (sporting) evident in azaleas, this author believes that the definition and name of an azalea cultivar should refer to a single clone. The ARS Registration form indicates that only clones may be named. (Article 11 defines a clone as "... a genetically uniform assemblage of individuals (which may be chimaeral in nature), derived originally from a single individual by asexual propagation . . . Individuals propagated from a distinguishable bud-mutation form a cultivar distinct from the parent plant.") If propagated, sports should be given distinct names. Before naming a sport, the originator should be especially diligent to propagate and test for a period long enough to provide reasonable assurance that its distinctive characteristics will persist.

Article 27.—a. A cultivar name published on or after 1 January 1959, must, except as noted in (b) and (c) below, be a fancy name, that is, not a botanical name in Latin form

b. A botanical epithet in Latin form, published in conformity with the Botanical Code, before, on, or after 1 January 1959, or published in conformity with this Code only, before 1 January 1959, for a plant or plants subsequently considered to be a cultivar, is to be retained as a cultivar name unless it duplicates an existing cultivar name of the species or hybrid concerned [For example,] *Rhododendron carolinianum* f. *luteum* [Frisbie], published . . . [in] 1959, when treated as a cultivar co-

extensive with this botanical category and not as a form, becomes *Rhododendron carolinianum* 'Luteum'

c. When there are two or more previously published botanical epithets in Latin form, the epithet that best preserves established usage should be chosen .

...
In Article 29, several cases relating to use of cultivar names in conjunction with botanical names or common names are treated. The essential point is that cultivar names should be set off by enclosing them in single quotation marks or by placing the abbreviation cv. before the cultivar name. Double quotation marks or the abbreviation var. must not be used to distinguish cultivar names.

Article 30.—On and after 1 January 1959, a new cultivar name should preferably consist of one or two words and must not consist of more than three words [emphasis added]. For the purposes of this Article an arbitrary sequence of letters, an abbreviation, or a numeral is counted as a word

Several forms of cultivar names are declared invalid by Article 31— inclusion of botanical or common names when confusion might result (as: camellia 'Rose'), combination of epithets of parent species (as: *Camellia* 'Salujapica' for *C. japonica* X *C. saluen-sis*), or inclusion of the word "variety" or its abbreviation ("variegated" may be used if written out in full). Although not having the full force of Articles in the Code, Code "Recommendations" (such as the following) are given due consideration by registration authorities.

Recommendation 31A.—It is strongly recommended that, whenever possible, new cultivar names in the following form should be avoided:

- a. Names composed of abbreviations, numerals or arbitrary sequences of letters
- b. Names containing an initial article, unless required by linguistic custom. Examples: Not

'The Colonel' but 'Colonel'; on the other hand, not 'Rochelle' but 'La Rochelle'.

- c. Names derived from proper names containing abbreviations, except for the abbreviation 'Mrs.' in English. Examples: Not 'G. Creelman' but 'George Creelman'; . . . not 'Mt. Kisco' but 'Mount Kisco'; not 'St. Tudy' but 'Saint Tudy'.
- d. Names containing forms of address, unless required by national custom, for example for married women. . . . [I.e, avoid Miss or Mister, or equivalents in other languages; Mrs., or a foreign-language equivalent for married women, is acceptable!]
- e. Names consisting of, or containing, excessively long words or phrases. Examples: 'Centenaire de Rozain-Bourcharlat'; 'Diplomgartenbauinspektor'.
- f. Names exaggerating the merits of a cultivar or which may become inaccurate Examples: tomato 'Earliest of All'; bean 'Longest Possible'; *Laburnum* 'Latest and Longest'.
- g. Names that refer to some attribute or attributes common or likely to become common in a group of related cultivars Examples: Not rose 'Yellow' [yellow could apply to many roses present and future] but rose 'Yellow Queen'
- h. Names likely to be confused with existing names within the same or a closely related cultivar class Examples: . . . 'Ellen', 'Helen', 'Helena', and 'Helene'; . . . 'Darwin' and 'Charles Darwin'.
- i. Names including the words Cross, Crosses, Hybrid, Hybrids, or grex.
- j. Names incorporating the common name of the plant. . . .

Article 32.—When a cultivar name has to be rendered in another language, it is preferably left un-

changed. It may, however, be transliterated or translated, in which case the transliteration or translation is regarded as the original name in a different form and its date is that of the original. Example: Cucumber 'Noa's Forcing' is a translation of Gurke 'Noas Treib';

Recommendation 32A.—Personal names should not be translated. Examples: 'Charles' should not be altered to 'Karl' or 'Karel'; 'San Pietro' should not be altered to 'Saint Peter', 'Sankt Peter', or 'Saint Pierre';

Article 35.—Each cultivar has one correct cultivar name, the single name by which it is internationally known. It may also have one or more legitimate synonyms. A commercial synonym is an alternative name of a cultivar which may be used instead of its correct name under restricted particular circumstances, for instance when a name is commercially unacceptable in a particular country. Examples: A name is not commercially acceptable when it is difficult to pronounce, or when the original name, or a translation, would have an undesirable connotation or implication.

This author believes that it is useful to include in a registration application as a synonym the hybridizer's ID number for a clone, since plants may have been distributed for testing under that number. Articles 33-52 deal mostly with a range of technical matters including legitimacy of cultivar name (conformance with the Code); valid publication of the name (nature of media and requirement for inclusion of description of plant); rules governing priority of publication; and retention, re-use, and rejection of cultivar names. One interesting restriction on publishing of cultivar names is found in the article next quoted.

Article 41.—Publication of a cultivar name is not valid if against the expressed wish of its originator or his assignee. [The note to Article 55 states that "The originator, in general, is the breeder or discoverer of the cultivar."]]

Article 53.—Cultivar registration is the acceptance of a cultivar name by a cultivation registration authority and the inclusion of this name in a register. . . .

Note: Acceptance of a name for cultivar registration does not necessarily imply judgment on the distinctness of the cultivar from others, or on its agricultural, horticultural, or silvicultural merit. **The testing of cultivars for distinctness is, nevertheless, of the greatest importance and should, when possible, be carried out before a name is accepted for cultivar registration [emphasis added]. . . .**

The stricture in Article 41 raises a frequently asked question: "Can I name a cultivar that someone else originated?" If the originator or his assignee is alive, his preference in the matter should be determined. For example, when the Tappan Zee Chapter of the ARS wanted to name Gartrell's hybrid P25-6 as 'Frank Arsen', I was asked to discuss the matter with Robert. He was delighted at the prospect of having one of his plants named to honor Frank Arsen. Because the flower form was quite different from his preference for cultivars in the Robin Hill series, he asked that his hybrids when named by others be called Gartrell Hybrids. In the absence of an originator or assignee to consult, anyone may register a named but unregistered clone, or propose and register a name for an unnamed clone.

Postscript

The collection and evaluation of data is tedious, but is worthwhile. An accurate registration description should make it possible for your cultivar to be propagated and distribut-

ed without the substitution of other clones. Even if the propagator uses material that is not true to name, the buyer—if he takes the trouble—can check the plants offered against the registration description. Descriptions rich in detail can prevent many mistakes from being propagated—literally as well as figuratively.

The author is well aware that the measurements and color evaluation suggested above require considerable time and effort. Using three or four typical flowers selected from a given plant at anthesis, the process of filling in a worksheet will take about 45 minutes after one has gained confidence in measuring and color evaluation; for the minimum required entries, about 30 minutes. This investment of time will be well rewarded by precluding the stress and frustration that can occur if one approaches the registration process unprepared!

A final note: the measurements and color evaluation entailed in preparing descriptions of your plants will seem complicated at first. With practice, they soon become second nature. Problems and questions will arise, and if you need help, do not hesitate to ask for it! You will find many ASA members glad to share with you their experience or direct you to someone who can better handle the query (including the ARS Registrar).

REFERENCES

- [1] Brickell, C. D., et al., *International Code of Nomenclature For Cultivated Plants—1980* (Formulated and adopted by the International Commission for the Nomenclature of Cultivated Plants of the I.U.B.S.), Utrecht: Bohn, Scheltema, and Holkema, 1980.
- [2] Greuter, W., et al., *International Code of Botanical Nomenclature* (Adopted by the Fourteenth International Botanical Congress, Berlin, July-August 1987), Koenigstein, FRG: Koeltz Scientific Books, 1988. □

Tips For Azalea Fans

Jane Newman

Great Falls, Virginia

The following simple suggestions for new members of the Azaleas Society of America are offered in the spirit of “if-only-I-had-known-20-years-ago” and in the hope they will elicit additional tips:

- **Keep records.** As you become more addicted to collecting azaleas, you will find it increasingly difficult to remember what varieties you have acquired and where they are. Try to reconstruct the history of plants you already have, and henceforth keep the account current. This will be a fun thing on your computer/word processor or another justification to get one.
- **Verify the identity of your plants.** For example, if you get a shipment of rooted cuttings or liners, plant them (alphabetically is convenient) where you can give them special care for a couple of years until they bloom and you are sure they are true to label. This will prevent the discovery that those pretty red ‘Conquests’ you got ten or 12 years ago and have shared with fellow enthusiasts are supposed to be “white, of very fine form, with a few short lines of Rhodamine Purple”. Most mislabeling is obviously caused by simple carelessness. Some wrong labels apparently occur because one person misreads another’s writing. Thus, you may eventually identify that pink ‘Cardinal’ as ‘Cordial’, ‘Red Bud’ as ‘Red Bird’, or ‘Lulu’ as ‘Zulu’.

Even getting a variety from different sources is not foolproof. When told that those big plants are not ‘Dimity’, you may realize that the two people you got them from were acquainted and that one must have unknowingly passed along a mislabeled plant to the other.

Being mislabeled does not diminish the beauty of an azalea. You may find your favorites and prize winners among those you have retagged at least temporarily “anon”, “unk”, “?”, or “X”. You just don’t want to perpetuate the chain of misidentification.

- **Labels.** Realize that the labels that come on your plants are not likely to be useful very long. Some nurseries use flimsy wrap-around paper tags with their name near the stem and the variety name on the end that disintegrates after a few weeks in contact with the moist ground. Others use more substantial wrap-around tags that eventually break off from expansion of the stem (by that time the variety name, either preprinted or handwritten, may no longer be legible). Still other nurseries use the pretty little pictures snapped precariously to the branch most likely to the jostled or broken off. Wired wooden tags have a very short legibility period.

Many types of stick-in-the-ground labels are available, but the white plastic ones are subject to breaking or fading. Of the two common types of zinc plates on galvanized wire stakes, the one that is wrapped onto the stake is easy to dislodge and is awkward to write on. The other plate is bigger and is easy to mark on both sides before threading it on the stake. Both kinds are subject to being pulled out when you drag a hose to the back of the bed where that azalea is obviously dying of thirst. If you do use the zinc labels to mark where your bulbs or perennials are going to disappear in winter, don’t throw away any stakes that become surplus because a plant has died or the wrap-around plate has fallen

off—they are excellent for anchoring together strips of weed-blocking landscape fabric.

You can invest in a gadget for embossing plant names on metal or vinyl tapes. You can also make your own labels from strips of aluminum cans imprinted by a ballpoint pen or from bleach jugs or opaque detergent containers marked by indelible pen. Horticultural markers are good to use with plastic, but hold tight to those little black caps—they have a maddening propensity to drop into the thickest mulch, leaving you with a pen that has a life expectancy of about three minutes.

If you buy the tags with both aluminum and “waterproof” cardboard sides, don’t waste your time marking the cardboard. One brand of tag has cardboard sealed between two layers of aluminum. It is stiff enough to allow easy printing by ballpoint on both sides and big enough (1 x 3-1/2 inches) to show date and source of the plant.

If you choose tie-on labels, tie them on with plastic-insulated copper wires long enough to allow for growth. Many azalea people have noted that a branch hung with a bare wire is the first to die and break off.

- **Make maps of your beds.** These will come in handy if you suffer such disasters of setting out 30 or 40 nice little Robin Hills from Frank White and discovering the next spring that rabbits have sheared half of them down to stubs and left the tags scattered (by the way, don’t try to solve your rabbit problem by acquiring a beagle unless you are sure she is willing to get off the den couch occasionally). Maps will also come in handy if your white plastic labels become brittle and crack to piec-

es, the "indelible" marking washes off, or your one-ply aluminum labels are twisted beyond readability or even severed by bluejays or squirrels. And of course they will come in handy in locating those 15 Glenn Dales or Greenwoods of which your friend wants cuttings.

- **Prepare ahead.** When you have a mail order shipment of older plants due, get your ten-dollar holes prepared in advance. You will feel so virtuous, and you will have more time when the new adoptees come to use your big crochet hook or claw hand-cultivator to gently pry apart any pot-bound roots. If you are planting on a slope, pile the dirt uphill so refilling is easier and so rain will wash the surplus into any nasty air pockets.
- **Soil Amendment.** If you order a load of sand to amend your heavy clay, be sure to specify coarse sand. Otherwise, when the time comes to transplant those five six-year-old 'Purple Lace' rhodies to their planned positions among the azaleas, you may see the fine sand fall away and the poor bare-rooted plants succumb within a few weeks. If you had used an equivalent volume of coarse sand, the rootballs would prob-

ably have been too heavy to move without a garden cart.

- **Mulching.** Choose pine bark over "hardwood" for mulching—it generally smells better and lasts longer. Also, it is said to have beneficial properties when mixed with the planting medium (beneficial properties are also claimed for alfalfa meal). Tree service crews that want to save time and gas and avoid dumping fees can be a cheap source of chips. You don't want a load of black walnut (almost universally accepted as poisonous to azaleas). You may want to avoid chipped wild cherry brush if your sacroiliac is already strained from pulling up cherry seedlings. Oak wood processed through newly sharpened blades is beautiful for years. On the other hand, hardwood bark mulch in plastic bags or available for bulk delivery from nurseries usually takes only a few months to become the perfect growing medium for all the nefarious weeds you are trying to smother.

If your community does not recycle cardboard, you can lay down cartons (stripped of staples and of plastic or reinforced tape) from major appliances, catfood, plant shipments, etc.,

between your plants and cover them with chips. Before the cardboard biodegrades it will prevent the germination of at least a few weed seeds, and you will definitely notice a lot of earthworms under it.

- **Cuttings.** If you run out of room for softwood cuttings in your basement or cold frame, try your grandmother's rose slip method to take hardwood cuttings of your azaleas that are too stiff to layer. Just prepare a shady spot with your usual cutting formula, use a rooting hormone, and keep the ground moist. You have an advantage over Grandma, since you can experiment with any sprig that will fit under a bottomless plastic milk jug or a wide-mouth mayonnaise jar.
- **THE AZALEAN.** Borrow past issues of THE AZALEAN from your chapter library and browse through them. You'll find the proverbial wealth of information.
- **Spread the joy.** You'll really attract attention if you take to the office samples of 'Quakeress' with four different beautiful ruffled blooms on a branch, or 'Koromo Shikibu' with its exotic shape, or any *kiusianum* paired with such big sisters as 'Moonbeam' or 'Lee Thomas'. □

Prize For Best Article In THE AZALEAN

In 1989, the Board of Directors authorized the editor of THE AZALEAN to establish an annual prize for the best article to appear in THE AZALEAN. The concept was to acquire through donations, a fund which when invested would provide an annual prize for the best article published in THE AZALEAN. Donations have been received, and the prize, to be named "The Chapters Prize," has been established. Funds have been do-

nated by the following chapters:

Richmond Virginia
Ben Morrison
Northern Virginia
Brookside Gardens
Tri - State

As stated in the September 1990 issue, the best article each year will be selected by a poll of the membership. The prize will be announced and awarded at the Annual Meeting of the Society. Owing to the early date for

the convention in 1991, the prize for the 1990 winner will be awarded at the 1992 convention, along with that for the 1991 winner.

Enclosed with this issue is a ballot listing all of the articles published in 1990. Please mark your ballot and mail it to:

AZALEAN Prize Article
P. O. Box 585
Glenn Dale, MD 20769 □

AZALEA BOOK LIST

Robert W. Hobbs
North Beach, Maryland

Following is a list of books primarily devoted to azaleas which I have compiled.
Some of these books are currently in print, and others must be obtained from out-of-print book dealers.

TITLE	AUTHOR	PUBLISHER	DATE
A Monograph of Azaleas (1921)	Ernest Henry Wilson & Alfred Rehder	Theophrastus/Sakonnet (reprint)	1977
All About Azaleas, Camellias and Rhododendrons	Editorial Staff/Ortho Books	Ortho Books	1985
Azaleas	Christopher Fairweather	Globe-Pequot	1988
Azaleas	Fred C. Galle	Timber Press	1982, 1987
Azaleas and Camellias	H. Harold Hume	Mac Millan Company	1946
Azaleas, Rhododendrons, Camellias	Editors of Sunset Books and Magazines	Lane Publishing Co.	1982
Azaleas and Rhododendrons and How to Use Them in your Garden	Staff, Horticultural Association, Inc. in Cooperation with the Amfac Garden Products	Western Company, Inc./Golden Publishing Press	1983
Compendium of Rhododendrons and Azalea Diseases	Duane L. Coyier, & Martha K. Roane	American Phytopathological Society Press	1986
Getting Started with Rhododendrons and Azaleas	J. Harold Clarke	Timber Press	1982
Great American Azaleas	Jim Darden	Greenhouse Press	1985
Growing Azaleas and Rhododendrons	Erik A. Neumann & Ralph E. Webb	U.S. Dept. of Agriculture/Home and Garden Bulletin Number 71; also reproduced and distributed by the Brookside Gardens Chapter, ASA	1980
Growing Azaleas Commercially	Edited by Anton M. Kofranek & Roy A. Larson	University of CA Div. of Agricultural Sciences	1975
How to Identify Rhododendron and Azalea Problems	A. L. Antonelli, R. S. Byther, R. R. Maleike, S. J. Collman, & A. D. Davison	Washington State Cooperative Extension	1984
Hybrids and Hybridizers	Philip A. Livingston & Franklin H. West	Harrowood Books	1978
Rhododendrons And Azaleas	Mervyn Kessell	Blandford Press	1981
Rhododendrons And Azaleas	Clement Gray Bowers	MacMillan Company	1960
Southern Living Azaleas	Fred C. Galle	Oxmoor House, Inc. Div. of Progressive Farmer Company	1974
The Azalea Book	Frederic P. Lee	Theophrastus/Sakonnet (reprint)	1980
The Glenn Dale Azaleas (Monograph 20)	B. Y. Morrison	U.S. Dept. of Agriculture; also reprint by Theophrastus/Sakonnet	1953 1978

Also worthy of note is the book *Shrubs* by Roger Phillips and Martyn Rix (Random House, 1989) which has several pages devoted to azaleas

Message and Status Report From the U.S. National Arboretum

Barbara L. Bullock, *Curator, Azalea and Rhododendron Collections*

The Glenn Dale Azalea Hillside planting, without question, is one of the major visitor attractions at the U.S. National Arboretum. During peak flowering - the last week in April through the first week in May, up to 40,000 people a day have visited the grounds on weekends. Why are so many visitors drawn to this display? Is it due to the mass effect of an entire hillside lit up in numerous subtle shades? Is it for the pleasure of wandering along trails which meander throughout the woods or for the experience of walking underneath explosions of color radiating from the over 40-year-old azaleas? Whichever it is, many of our visitors eventually ask themselves, "What has happened to this azalea collection?" The collection seems, upon closer observation, to be getting swallowed by invasive woody vines. Relevant to understanding this situation are the significant changes and fluctuations in staff, funding, and priorities undergone by the Arboretum in the last 44 years.

The original planting of the hillside of azaleas was the work of the first Director of the U.S. National Arboretum, B. Y. Morrison. Planted in 1947, the hybrid seedlings were part of Morrison's effort to breed a collection of attractive, hardy azaleas suited for our climate in Washington, D.C. The plants are unnamed and unmapped Glenn Dale azaleas. Although not selected for introduction into the nursery trade, many may still possess superior qualities and characteristics. In 1953, the Azalea Valley was planted with deciduous azaleas, a gift from the Dutch government in appreciation for assistance in World War II. But, unfortunately these azaleas did not do well in our climate. The Morrison Clonal Garden was added in 1954, featuring the named Glenn Dale azaleas that B. Y. Morrison developed. Around 1970,

the entire garden was reworked, and all plants were removed and replanted in order to raise the beds a foot for drainage purposes. The Azalea Loop Trail was added between 1954-59, and the azaleas were later dug up and given more space to grow in the late 1960's. The rain shelter in the Azalea Valley was constructed in 1957. The Lee Azalea Garden and pond were added in 1971. This garden, named in honor of Frederic P. Lee, National Arboretum Advisory Council Chairman, contains a large selection of late blooming azaleas, featuring primarily Satsuki azaleas.

Many big-leaf rhododendrons have been tried in various locations in the collections. The rhododendrons with native or hardy parentage in their backgrounds (such as *Rhododendron catawbiense*, *R. maximum*, or *R. fortunei*) do the best in our area. During the 1970-80's, much effort was placed on completing collections of Glenn Dale, Satsuki, and other azalea groups. Dr. Roy Magruder, "retired" scientist and plant breeder from Beltsville Agricultural Research Center, worked very hard on this project. We also obtained a significant collection of native *Rhododendron* species from Korea and Japan which are still being evaluated.

At the present time, Andrew Ford, Sr., 23-year veteran Arboretum gardener, my volunteer, Peggy Reid, who comes to help one day a week, and I, as curator, limit our work efforts to maintaining approximately 30 of the original 80 acres of azalea plantings. While continuing to add to the existing collections, seeing to labelling, irrigation, and weed control, I am concentrating on finding specific solutions to areas of trail stability, drainage, lighting, pruning and/or removal of large trees. Our goals for the first half of 1991 include: during February, two fine sets of steps which were rebuilt for the first time since their installation (one set is uphill from the Lee Garden leading into the Azalea Loop Trail, and one set leads

from the central part of the Morrison Garden uphill into the Glenn Dale Hillside planting), two old tool sheds were restored with new roofs, and brickwork was done in the Morrison Garden. During March, the overgrown English Boxwood hedges (*Buxus sempervirens* 'Suffruticosa') in the Morrison Garden are being trimmed to half their current height (to 16") in order to better view the Glenn Dale azaleas within the garden. During April, we hope to add between 300-500 additional azaleas and rhododendrons to the collection. Among these are Dexter rhododendrons, *R. kiusianum* cultivars, Hwang azaleas, *R. yakushimanum* cultivars, Satsuki azaleas, and others. During May, we will concentrate on mapping and identification. During June, we hope to do some propagating. During the summer, the plans are to renovate the Lee Garden pond, build two more sets of steps, and replace the roof of the rain shelter in the valley overlook area.

We are working to restore our azalea collection and are very much dependent on volunteer aid. We are making progress, but there is much more to do. Volunteers are needed to assist in the weeding, pruning, mapping, and planting of the azalea collections. If you volunteer, you would work directly with the curator and would be exposed to garden talk of all dimensions. If you are interested in helping, please call me at (202) 475-3854. □

ASA Member Receives Award

The Catherine H. Sweeney Award, which recognizes extraordinary and dedicated efforts in the field of horticulture, has been awarded to Mr. Thomas H. Dodd, Jr. for his work "in collecting, growing, and popularizing native shrubs of the South."

Mr. Dodd is owner of Tom Dodd Nurseries, Inc, in Semmes, Alabama. In the period from 1940 to 1987 he made numerous field trips to the

Southeastern and Southwestern states and to foreign countries in search of unusual plants that could be adapted to commercial production. Currently, he is involved in a seed exchange program with a Japanese botanist who is interested in bog plants and native azaleas.

Mr. Dodd is responsible for a number of ivy and camellia introductions, including azaleas 'Kate Arendall', 'Amy', 'Jennifer', 'Betsy', and 'Rebekah'. Interspecific hybrids of native azaleas are his current interest.

Mr. Dodd received the 1969 AHS Commercial Award for his development of an outstanding nursery. Since then he has received the award for Outstanding Forestry Achievement for advancement of forestry in Alabama; a medal of honor from the Garden Club of America; the North American Native Plantsman first annual award of excellence and the Ralph S. Peer Memorial Trophy of the American Camellia Society. (Excerpted from the *American Horticulturist*, March 1991 issue.) □

The Effect of Metolachlor on Azaleas

J. Ray Frank and C. E. Beste

Yellow nutsedge (*Cyperus esculentus*) is a major problem in a variety of woody nursery crops, including azalea, euonymus and holly, as well as in ground covers, bedding plants and numerous floral crops. However, because ericaceous crops are typically shallow-rooted, yellow nutsedge can be an especially troublesome prob-

lem for them, successfully competing for moisture and nutrients.

Unfortunately, many herbicides now registered for use in nursery stock control this weed only poorly. Pennant (metolachlor) has proved a successful control in turf, azalea, cotoneaster, holly, rhododendron and yew but injures newly planted Korean azaleas and box-leaf Japanese holly.

Experiments were conducted at a Maryland nursery between 1985 and 1988 to determine injury levels of metolachlor on newly planted and established woody ericaceous nursery plants, including azaleas (table follows), leucothoes, pierises and rhododendrons.

TESTED AZALEAS
'Delaware Valley White'
'Double Pink'
'Hershey's Red'
'Hot Shot'
'Karen'
'Lady Robin'
'Pleasant White'
'Renee Michelle'
'Rosebud'
'Tradition'

After rooted cuttings were planted, they were mulched and Pennant was applied at one of four rates (pounds per acre): four, six, eight or 12. Weeds present were counted and phytotoxicity was evaluated regularly.

Throughout the four years, weed cover never exceeded five percent.

It was determined that applying metolachlor in the spring or fall at or above a rate of six pounds per acre may cause some early foliar phytotoxicity to newly planted azaleas. However, no significant phytotoxicity or size reduction was found on any of the crops at the time of harvest.

July applications of six pounds metolachlor per acre caused some temporary injury to established 'Delaware Valley White', 'Double Pink', 'Hershey's Red', 'Hot Shot', 'Karen', 'Lady Robin', 'Rosebud' and 'Tradition' azaleas as well as to coast leucothoe and 'P.J.M.' rhododendron.

The highest rate (12 pounds per acre) caused foliar injury and size reduction on selected ericaceous plants.

However, metolachlor applied at a rate of four pounds per acre controlled yellow nutsedge without significant injury to any of the plants.

J. Ray Frank is weed scientist for the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Research Service in Frederick, MD.

C. E. Beste is an associate professor of weed science with the University of Maryland, College Park. The report was originally printed in the Journal of Environmental Horticulture, Vol. 8, No. 4, Dec. 1990. The report was abstracted from the American Nurseryman, April 1, 1991 issue. □

THE AZALEAN Back Issues Index

When new members join the ASA, they receive a "welcome packet" which contains, among other things, a notice indicating the availability of back issues of **THE AZALEAN**. If you would like to receive a copy of the current seven-page index which lists all the issues and the major articles that they contain, send a check made out to **TREASURER, ASA** in the amount of \$1.00 to:

AZALEAN INDEX,
P.O. Box 34536,
West Bethesda, MD 20827-0536. □

Report of the Public Information Committee for 1991

William C. Miller III, *Chairman*

For the period beginning May 1, 1990 and ending April 30, 1991 I submit the following report. With the establishment of a new official society address and post office box at the West Bethesda post office, the transition to the new box continues. The old box in Silver Spring, Maryland, now no longer in use, will be maintained until such time as the volume of incoming mail falls off and the transition is determined to be complete. The old address has become sufficiently established in print that it was felt inappropriate to terminate the box abruptly.

The Public Information Committee, formerly a committee of three, is now a committee of one with the withdrawal of both Ryon Page and Rusty Laguadia due to health reasons. For many years, Ryon and Rusty faithfully accepted the responsibility for managing the Silver Spring box. They cooperated in making the long trip out to Aspen Hill, the location of the old box, in performing triage on the incoming mail, and in some cases preparing responses. The reduction in committee members has been something of a hardship, but I have managed a schedule of weekly visits to the Silver Spring box to maintain coverage. An effort

will be made to find individuals who might be interested in participating in this very worthwhile National function of responding to public inquiries.

Last year was the first year for which statistics were collected, and I closed my 1990 report with the prediction that the number of cards and letters would increase dramatically. In 1990, I reported that 76 letters or cards from 27 states, three Canadian provinces and one foreign country (Sweden) were received and answered for an average of 6.3 per month. This year, 136 cards and letters from 30 states and the District of Columbia, one Canadian province, and three foreign countries (Panama, Scotland, and Argentina) were received and answered. This reflects an average of 11.3 responses per month, a significant 78.9% increase over the previous year, and a lot of standing in line at the post office. In 1990, June of 1989 and March of 1990 were the heaviest periods with ten responses each. In 1991, June of 1990 and April of 1991 were the heaviest months with 28 and 21 responses respectively.

As the Azalea Society becomes more visible and better established in the horticultural community, this National activity of responding to public inquiries will grow in importance. It presently represents our best effort towards public outreach and education and is an activity worthy of full National commitment. □

Ben Morrison Chapter

A meeting of the Ben Morrison Chapter was held at the home of Ms. Thais Spenser on May 5. Final plans were made for the azalea show which was held at London Town Gardens in Edgewater, Maryland the weekend of May 11-12, 1991. The chapter also discussed plans for the Society's 1992 Annual Meeting and Convention. □

Brookside Gardens Chapter

Bill Johnson, *President*

The last meeting of the Brookside Gardens Chapter was held on February 2, 1991 at the Potomac Library. Denise Stelloh, chairperson of the Show Committee for the Landon Azalea Festival, gave an update on the design for the 1991 display garden. Teresa Dunnington, chairperson of the Azalea Mart led a discussion on advertising and other needs of this year's mart.

Jan Midgley, owner of a home-based wild-flower nursery in Potomac that specializes in native plants presented the evening's educational program. Jan gave an informative talk on companion plants for azaleas, illustrated with over eighty slides of herbaceous plants, shrubs and ferns.

On April 13th over 20 members were treated to a special presentation by Brian Barr in the home of Bob and Denise Stelloh. Brian, who's currently in the Longwood Graduate Program, gave a slide program of his three-week internship in Costa Rica. Eleven days were spent at the Wilson Botanical Gardens (a research institution operated by the Organization for Tropical Studies) in San Vito, where his group was instrumental in creating a begonia display in the garden. Of course there are not many azaleas in the Tropics, but he did have one shot of a rhododendron among many other beautiful images. Brian is an excellent speaker capable of making us consider a winter vacation in Costa Rica. □

Richmond, VA Chapter

Ray Doggett, *President*

In late March, the Richmond chapter met at the Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden. Organizers of the booth for the Maymont Flower and Garden Show reported a very successful weekend event which generated good publicity for ASA and attracted a list of prospective new members.

Pete Vines was the speaker for the evening, and as usual, he was terrific and his slides superb. His Holly Springs varieties will be eagerly anticipated in the future. In April chapter members enjoyed a Saturday outing to Hampton, VA, where they toured Le-Mac Nursery owned by ASA members Ken and Sandra McDonald. "Hampton Beauty" and "Williamsburg" are two of their azalea introductions. Four gardens in Richmond's West End were enjoyed during a Garden Tour in May. These were the gardens of Pauline Bickerstaff, Sally Guy, Nancy Swell and Rosalie Nachman. □

Tours included Longue Vue Gardens, Zemurray Gardens, Hammond Research Station, private patio gardens in the New Orleans French Quarter and several area nurseries. □

Malcolm Clark, President; William C. Miller III, Vice President; Carol Flowers, Secretary; and Glenn Taylor, Treasurer. Edward Rothe, Eleanor Stubbs, and Rosalie Nachman were elected to two-year terms as directors.

Officers and Directors Elected

Results of the election of officers were announced at the Annual Meeting held in New Orleans on March 23:

In this transition election the president and vice president were elected for two-year terms, and the secretary and treasurer were elected for one-year terms. □

Highlights from Azalea Society National Convention

The 1991 Azalea Society Convention drew a large number of participants this year. The convention took place March 21 though 23 in New Orleans, LA. Besides business meetings, a number of educational events were scheduled. There was an array of displays and workshops, and the central theme of this year's convention was Azaleas in the South.

Dr. Larry Brown described his efforts in breeding for everblooming azaleas.

Dr. Richard James Stadtherr gave a very detailed talk and slide presentation on how to breed azaleas, capturing and preserving pollen (some for as long as three years).

Robert Lee, coordinator for the convention and now President of the Louisiana Chapter, also gave an informative talk on crosses between native *Rhododendron austrinum* x Exbury hybrids.

Naud Burnette's address at the Saturday banquet concerned the design and realization of extensive azalea plantings in the Color Garden of the Dallas Arboretum.

Articles based on talks presented at the Convention will appear in the September issue of **THE AZALEAN**.

Azalea Calendar

1991

- July 15** Deadline for receiving material (articles and Chapter news) for September issue of **THE AZALEAN**.
- September 14** Glenn Dale Project Work Day, 9:00AM-1:00PM. For more information call Bill Miller at (301) 365-0692.
- October 15** Deadline for receiving material (articles and Chapter news) for December issue of **THE AZALEAN**.
- October 19** Glenn Dale Project Work Day, 9:00AM-1:00PM. For more information call Bill Miller at (301) 365-0692.
- November 16** Glenn Dale Project Work Day, 9:00AM-1:00PM. For more information call Bill Miller at (301) 365-0692.

1992

- May 14-17** ASA Convention and Annual Meeting at Solomons Island, Maryland; sponsored by the Ben Morrison Chapter.

March 1991 Mailing Statistics

There were 784 copies of the March issue of **THE AZALEAN** in the bulk mailing. Below is a state-by-state summary of the mailing.

Foreign = 16	Delaware = 8	California = 28
Rhode Island = 2	Virginia = 159	Oregon = 18
New Jersey = 34	North Carolina = 43	Washington, DC = 11
Pennsylvania = 25	Georgia = 36	Mississippi = 6
Maryland = 148	Alabama = 19	Ohio = 8
West Virginia = 2	Kentucky = 4	Illinois = 5
South Carolina = 18	Indiana = 24	Kansas = 2
Florida = 12	Minnesota = 4	Arkansas = 2
Massachusetts = 12	Missouri = 5	Texas = 48
Connecticut = 6	Louisiana = 24	Hawaii = 2
New York = 25	Oklahoma = 1	Washington = 15
New Hampshire = 2	Tennessee = 9	Michigan = 1

ASA NEW MEMBERS

AT-LARGE MEMBERS

Carole & Edmund Ackell
9924 Colony Bluff Drive
Richmond, VA 23233-5556
PHONE: (804) 741-9657

Robert Adams
453 N. State Road 9
Shelbyville, IN 46176
PHONE: (317) 392-3502

John D. Allen
1810 Woodside Avenue
Halethorpe, MD 21227
PHONE: (301) 242-6283

Carl R. Amason
P. O. Box 164
Calion, AR 71724
PHONE: (501) 748-2362

Dr. & Mrs. Earl T. Anderson
23270 Mora Hts Way
Los Altos, CA 94026
PHONE: (415) 948-1815

Jeff & Lisa Beasley
RR 2/Box 15
Lavonia, GA 30553
PHONE: (404) 356-1726

Mary S. Beasley
RR 2/Box 16
Lavonia, GA 30553
PHONE: (404) 356-8947

W. Gary & Anna Becker
8806 Ray Nash Court
Gig Harbor, WA 98335
PHONE: (206) 265-2796

Linda Bergeron
4 Frost Drive
Nashua, NH 03063-2710
PHONE: (603) 889-6731

Marge Bergfeld
1126 North Drive
St. Louis, MO 63122
PHONE: (314) 966-2516

Berry Botanic Garden
11505 S.W. Summerville Ave.
Portland, OR 97219
PHONE: (503) 636-4112

John H. Berry, Jr.
48 Atwill Road
West Roxbury, MA 02134
PHONE: (617) 327-3244

Mr. & Mrs. James C Blair
111 Ridgely Drive
Wetumpka, IL 36092
PHONE: (205) 567-4280

Warwick P. Bonsal
5 Stolls Alley
Charleston, SC 29401
PHONE: (803) 722-4585

Martha C. Buford
33 Mission Road
Wichita, KS 67206
PHONE: (316) 684-6777

Mr. & Mrs. Ralph E. Burgess
209 Balsam Road
Hendersonville, NC 28792
PHONE: (704) 693-0822

Mr. & Mrs. Hans E. Bussink
P. O. Box 72
Aurora, NC 27806
PHONE: (919) 322-7234

Mrs. Jean Cattier
384 Oyster Bay Road
Locust Valley, NY 11560
PHONE: (516) 676-0806

John & Jean Chandler
385 Oakwood Drive
Wyckoff, NJ 07481
PHONE: (201) 891-2381

Michael T. Dwyer
840 Bridle Lane
Cutchogue, Long Island
NY 11935
PHONE: (516) 734-7475

Dr. & Mrs. James Eberl
7 Rose Hill Road
Moylan, PA 19065
PHONE: (215) 566-1196

Deborah Elliott
Applewood Greenhouse
1400 East Kearsley St.
Flint, MI 48503
PHONE: (313) 233-3031

Katherine Elliott
P. O. Box 159
Colton, OR 97017
PHONE: (503) 630-6020

Maria Farro
Box 1923
Duxbury MA 02331
PHONE: (617) 934-5698

Joel D. Fedder
12600 Bonita Avenue
Owings Mill, MD 21117
PHONE: (301) 526-6900

Herbert G. Frey
660 Adelpia Road
Freehold, NJ 07728
PHONE: (908) 431-4229

Gerald Friedman
15 Finch Forest Trail
Atlanta, GA 30327
PHONE: (404) 255-6371

Evelyn Gondek
320 Crooked Lane
King of Prussia, PA 19406
PHONE: (215) 272-2941

David E. Grantham
2760 Catherine Street
Dallas, TX 75211
PHONE: (214) 941-5597

Marshall & Marilyn Gressman
2326 Sherman Avenue
Vineland, NJ 08360
PHONE: (609) 692-2341

Charles & Louise Hallick
6 Brightford Heights
Rochester, NY 14610-3510
PHONE: (716) 586-2271

Stewart Hamilton
P. O. Box 174
Redan, GA 30074
PHONE: (404) 482-9743

Mark M. Holeman
7871 Hague Road
Indianapolis, IN 46256
PHONE: (317) 849-3120

Dr. Clayton D. Lanphear, III
1133 Main Street
Chepachet, RI 02814
PHONE: (401) 568-6658

Laurel Hill Nursery Company
P. O. Box 596
Dallas, NC 28034
PHONE: (704) 824-3514

Carl A. Jacobson
SR Box 7A
Haiku, HI 96708
PHONE: (808) 572-8096

Peder D. Jakobson
12 Dickerson Avenue
Bayville, NY 11709
PHONE: (516) 628-1241

Marvin Jernigan
231 Ravenwood Way Warner
Robins, GA 31093
PHONE: (912) 922-2300

Raymond & Paula Kelley
11 Orchard Rest Road
Sherman, CT 06784
PHONE: (203) 355-0253

Charles King
Deer Run Nursery
182 Peskin Road
Farmingdale, NJ 07727
PHONE: (908) 938-5721

Frederic Knippel
P. O. Box 2046
Acton, MA 01720
PHONE: (508) 263-5694

John & Dorothy Knippenberg
736 Pines Lake Drive, W.
Wayne, NJ 07470
PHONE: (201) 835-0491

Robert T. Koehl
11505 Hutcheson Ferry Rd
Palmetto, GA 30268
PHONE: (404) 463-4260

Mr. Howard Kuhn
5511 Tewkesbury Place
Sarasota, FL 34241
PHONE: (813) 921-5917

Gus & Ann Langley
Lindy Lane Nursery
640 Lindy Lane NW
Coos Bay, OR 97420
PHONE: (503) 888-4303

David G. Leach
1984 Hubbard Road
North Madison, OH 44057

Bill Lindeman
30 Baycliff Pl., Kala Pt.
Port Townsend, WA 98368
PHONE: (206) 385-2689

Martin Maciag
1717 Pine Forest Drive
Scotland Neck, NC 27874

William A. & Ann W. Mangels
1901 Eastland Road
Baltimore, MD 21204
PHONE: (301) 337-2858

Mike McCullough
2040 Beatrice Court #2
San Jose, CA 95128
PHONE: (408) 295-0842

Missouri Botanical Garden
(Walter Behrendt)
P. O. Box 299
St. Louis, MO 63166
PHONE: (314) 577-5100

Henry M. Morgan
P. O. Box 21
Lincoln, MA 01773
PHONE: (617) 259-8645

Richard Murcott
Linden Lane
East Norwich, NY 11732
PHONE: (516) 922-7748

R. Mutzberg
3218 Wood Valley Road
Atlanta, GA 30327

Melvin Osterman
32 Darnley Greene
Delmar, NY 12054
PHONE: (518) 487-7716

John C. Pair
1901 E. 95th South
Wichita, KS 67233
PHONE: (316) 788-0492

Ronnie D. Palmer
RR 8, Box 139
Pine Bluff, AR 71602
PHONE: (501) 247-1574

Joe B. Parks
195 Long Hill Road
Dover, NH 03820
PHONE: (603) 749-4498

William W. Peacock
2267 Bahama Road
Lexington, KY 40509
PHONE: (606) 293-2666

Dr. P. Perlman
Mountainside Road/RR 4
Mendham, NJ 07945
PHONE: (201) 543-4239

Charles W. Petterson
P. O. Box 952
Bridgehampton, NY 11932
PHONE: (516) 537-1495

Ralph & Claire Picarella
1813 Renner Road
Keymar, MD 21757
PHONE: (301) 845-6442

Anthony S. Raimo
645 Ramapo Valley Road
Oakland, NJ 07436

Charles Robeson
100 Mitchell Avenue, #703
Port St. Lucie, FL 34952

Newton Y. Robinson
Box 824
Alfred, NY 14802
PHONE: (607) 587-8326

Kenneth & Patricia Rose
265 Poplar Lane
Elizabethtown, PA 17022
PHONE: (717) 367-5213

Cio & Liza Scallet
P. O. Box 68
Batesville, VA 22924
PHONE: (703) 456-6478

Dennis & La Donna Schrank
6210 Oakview Place
Ferndale, WA 98248
PHONE: (206) 384-4426

Barbara Schwendtke
16610 100th Street NE
Granite Falls, WA 98252
PHONE: (206) 691-7903

Louis F. Seeds
R9 Bright Acres
Bethlehem, PA 18015

A. J. Shoosmith
11616 Hillside Road
Chester, VA 23831
PHONE: (804) 748-2484

Headley Shouse
322 W. University Drive
Chapel Hill, NC 27516

Caroline C. Spiller
Box 572
Kentfield, CA 94914-0572

Franklin M. Sterni
409 Summer Street
Lynnfield, MA 01940
PHONE: (617) 334-3845

Francis E. Stewart
RR 4/Box 121-B
Jasper, GA 30143
PHONE: (404) 735-4870

Larry Stockton
79 Lynn Drive
Woodbury, NJ 08096
PHONE: (609) 845-7130

Robert Temple, MD
3325 Rowland Place, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20008
PHONE: (202) 363-0137

Mr. & Mrs. August Thieme
580 Ville Ponteaux Lane
Richmond, VA 23233
PHONE: (804) 784-5867

Ronald & Millicent Thompson
110 Lantern Lane
Rochester, NY 14623
PHONE: (716) 424-4162

Reuben M. Tomberlin
RR 2/Box 304
Indian Trail, NC 28079

Anthony Tomich
23031 Bartolome
Mission Viejo, CA 92692
PHONE: (714) 458-1144

Rudolph F Valois
25 Dryden Road
P. O. Box 81
Basking Ridge, NJ 07920-0081
PHONE: (908) 766-2668

Patrick Vettling
1538 Waterloo
South Saint Paul, MN 55075
PHONE: (612) 451-2994

Mr. Robert F. Wall
33332 132d Street SE
Sultan, WA 98294
PHONE: (206) 793-1377

Richard Walle
17100 Road 525
Pass Christian, MS 39571
PHONE: (601) 255-7308

Robert & Eileen Ward
13102 122d Avenue Ct E.
Puyallup, WA 98374
PHONE: (206) 848-9855

Mr. & Mrs. R. D. Welshmer
15 Lanier Drive
Chapel Hill, NC 27514
PHONE: (919) 933-1400

Dale & Lynette Westmoreland
13529 Highway 450
Franklinton, LA 70438
PHONE: (504) 839-5713

Lela Bell Westmoreland
15109 Westmoreland Road
Franklinton, LA 70438
PHONE: (504) 839-3175

Steve Wheeler
1416 N. Allen Street
State College, PA 16803
PHONE: (814) 237-7016

Arthur & Gina Wiley
96796 DeMoss Road
Brookings, OR 97415-9163
PHONE: (503) 469-4034

Worcester County
Horticultural Society
30 Towerhill Road
Boylston, MA 01505
PHONE: (508) 869-6111

Steven T. Yeatts
235 Pinewood Circle
Athens, GA 30606
PHONE: (404) 549-6720

Donald Zaun
Box 74
Wasco, IL 60183
PHONE: (708) 584-0977

Milton Zipper
2 Meudon Drive
Locust Valley, NY 11560
PHONE: (516) 759-1610

Linda & John Zottoli
2901 N. Rochester Street
Arlington, VA 22213
PHONE: (703) 533-0265

BROOKSIDE GARDENS CHAPTER

Aspen Hill Garden Club
13110 Superior Street
Rockville, MD 20853
PHONE: (301) 460-1511

LOUISIANA CHAPTER

James Greene Campbell
406 W. Morris
Hammond, LA 70437

Loyd Cotton
2213 Washington Street
Franklinton, LA 70438

Robert H. & Mary B. Griffin
506 Oak Valley Drive
Pearl River, LA 70452
PHONE: (504) 863-2875

TRI-STATE CHAPTER

Alan D. & Carol Christman
4610 Weaver Road
Evansville, IN 47711

Stephen C. & Pennae Fuchs
5211 Nolan
Evansville, IN 47712

Bob Garriott
3773 Stringtown Road
Evansville, IN 47711
PHONE: (812) 422-2498

George S. & Kathy Shiflett
5001 Timber Lane
Henderson, KY 42420