

Volume 28 · Number 3 · Fall 2006

The

Azalean

Journal of the Azalea Society of America

**On the Trail of "Stevenson's Collection" of
Kurume Azaleas—An Historical Perspective**

New Azalea Garden to Honor Margie Jenkins

**Announcing the New Editor
for The Azalean**

What is an Azalea Trail

**"Azaleas in the Pines—A Texas Garden Party":
The 2007 ASA Convention**



7195 Henson Landing Road
Welcome, MD 20693

President's Letter

Robert (Buddy) Lee — Independence, Louisiana

Another long, hot, and dry summer is finally coming to an end. The cooler temperatures and lower humidity make it a great time to catch up with all your garden activities. That "touch of fall in the air" feeling surely invigorates me to get outside. I like to tidy up my azalea beds by getting out those last pesky weeds and re-mulching some needy areas. The fall is also a great time for planting not only azaleas but also other ornamental shrubs. And remember that an azalea planted correctly and in the appropriate location will give you years of enjoyment.

The Azalea City Project has two new cities that are working on their certification. South Gate, California, and Houston, Texas, are both well on their way to becoming the next ASA Azalea Cities. Joe Schild and his committee have been working diligently with this project and making sure that only the appropriate and deserving cities receive the certification. If you know a city that is actively involved with azalea festivals or other azalea activities, please encourage them to contact Joe

Schild for more information on how to become an Azalea City. Applications can also be reviewed on our Web site, www.azaleas.org and then click on "Azalea City." Azalea City certification is a great project for our *Society* and it is a great certification for a *city*.

As you may have noticed, this Fall 2006 issue of *The Azalean* is serving as the 2007 convention issue instead of the usual winter issue. Barbara Stump and her committee for the 2007 national convention wanted to get the information out to the membership earlier this year because the convention is going to be held in late March, six to eight weeks earlier than our last three conventions. This will give each of us more time to decide to attend and make travel arrangements. So get those registration forms filled out and join us in Nacogdoches, Texas, on March 29-April 1. By all indications, it's going to be a fantastic convention.

Hope everyone is having a safe, happy, and productive fall.

Robert (Buddy) Lee

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 azaleas Subgenera *Tsutsusi* and *Pentanthera* of the genus *Rhododendron* in the Heath family (*Ericaceae*).

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On the Cover

'Ann Lee McPhail' (Chikyu-no-haru x 'Surprise') is a Harris hybrid evergreen azalea that shows the brilliant dark banding around the outer edges of the petals and large flower size (4") that are so prized in Satsuki azaleas and the mid-season bloom and shrub habit of the Glenn Dale. The shrubs will get 44" high by 33" wide in 10 years. James Harris, of

Lawrenceville, Georgia, began his breeding work in 1970, developing large-flowered late-to mid-season varieties. They are hardy in Zones 7a to 9b.

This plant is one of nearly 200 cultivars donated to the SFA Ruby M. Mize Azalea Garden by Maarten van der Giessen, of Van der Giessen Nursery, in Semmes, Alabama, from 1999 through 2003. When Maarten heard that the Arboretum in Nacogdoches, Texas, was developing its eight-acre azalea garden, he knew this would be a great place to house an additional germplasm repository of unusual cultivars. This is also one example of his interest in increasing use of Satsuki and their progeny in the trade and in home landscapes. (Photo by Barbara Stump)

The Azalean

Journal of the Azalea Society
of America

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Corrections

We regret the following errors in the Summer 2006 issue that need correction: Our list of board of directors list for terms expiring in 2006 should not have been shown.

The corrected version is as follows:

Terms Expire in 2008

John Brown

Ron Hooper

Tom Milner

The correct list is shown in the masthead on p. 50 of this issue.

On page 33, in Earl Sommerville's biographical sketch, mid-70s should have read late 70s, since the ASA was not founded until 1979.

On the Trail of “Stevenson’s Collection” of Kurume Azaleas

An Historical Perspective on the Introduction to Britain of
“Wilson’s Fifty” and “Stevenson’s Collection” — Part I

John M. Hammond — Starling, Manchester, England

Introduction

On the cover of a recent issue of *The Azalean* is a close-up of ‘Haru-no-akebono’ that is said to be “a Kurume introduction by the late J.B. Stevenson of England . . . the source is unknown.”(1) While the “unknown” source is not exactly the whole story, it is well worth noting at the outset that there are currently very few records available in Britain regarding the collection of Kurume azaleas introduced by Stevenson. Most azalea enthusiasts will be conversant with the “Wilson’s Fifty” collection of Kurumes, but few will have heard of “Stevenson’s Collection,” or be aware that the history of both collections is inextricably entwined. If you have an interest in superior varieties of evergreen azaleas then you may find this tale somewhat thought provoking.

There is little doubt, compared with the coverage of rhododendrons in the printed media in Britain, that in general terms azaleas are something of a “Cinderella,” as over the years they have received scant coverage in the horticultural press. This situation is something of a paradox as many gardens, both public and private, contain a range of evergreen and deciduous types but their use has been mainly for decorative purposes and many enthusiasts in Britain do not regard them as being part of a rhododendron collection. So, while they provide a spectacular backcloth each spring they tend to receive less TLC than rhododendrons, and they are usually not labelled. Some reports have suggested that many of the Kurume azaleas do not perform very well in Britain, but in the author’s experience this is quite subjective as their performance tends to be directly related to their geographical location and the level of exposure to the sun. While these notes have been compiled from many sources, the threads running through the narrative are intended to provide a perspective from the British side of the Atlantic and, in turn, perhaps they will generate some further discussion, as in this way we all benefit. As these notes have been written primarily for an American audience, some additional elements of historical background have been woven into the story to make the people and places covered by the article more readily identifiable.

“Wilson’s Fifty” Kurume Azaleas

On April 24, 1919, two sets of the 50 varieties chosen by Ernest H. Wilson from 250 varieties in the garden of Mr. Kijiro

Akashi in Kurume, Japan, arrived at the Arnold Arboretum. It was intended that these be propagated and distributed under the names given to them by Mr. Akashi. The origin of the Kurume azalea is attributed to Motozo Sakamoto, and, after his death, Mr. Akashi acquired his collection and then spent 40 years developing this group of hybrids. Little more needs to be said about the origin of “Wilson’s Fifty,” as their background and the process by which they were chosen are well documented by Wilson himself.(2)

Wilson ensured that all the 50 plants were correctly labelled, but later recognised that there was difficulty in pronouncing their Japanese names. In April 1926 he added English names to all but one plant, and this single plant was named in 1927. It is said that the plants were subsequently distributed under numbers only. Two sets of “Wilson’s Fifty” made their way across the Atlantic to two famous private gardens: one set to J.C. Williams at Caerhays Castle in Cornwall, and the other to the Tower Court home of John B. Stevenson. Wilson’s “connections” with J.C. Williams at Caerhays were covered in a recent article in the *Journal ARS*.(11) It is likely that the two sets arrived at Caerhays Castle and Tower Court in the early 1920s. John Barr Stevenson began laying out the rhododendron gardens at Tower Court in 1919, immediately after the First World War, and in the early 1920s married Roza, his beautiful and “green-fingered” wife. Tower Court stood on a small wooded ridge between Ascot and Bagshot, the summit of Tower Hill being a short distance from the house. From the house the ground descended in a series of valleys and the Stevensons created avenues of plants leading downhill from the house. Bordering one of these avenues that contained fastigate cherries, the plants of “Wilson’s Fifty” were established. While Stevenson would later become the editor of *The Species of Rhododendron*, first published in 1930 and for many years the accepted textbook on the genus, his interests ranged well beyond the species.

In July 1946, in the immediate aftermath of WWII, John B. Stevenson and Charles Williams provided cutting material to the Royal Horticultural Society’s (RHS) garden at Wisley with a view to establishing a further set of “Wilson’s Fifty.”

(Note: The orthography of several of the names from the International Rhododendron Register and Checklist (2nd Edition)—IRRC is indicated in brackets after some of the quoted material, with thanks to Don Voss and William C. Miller III, Ed.)

The rooted cuttings were planted on the North side of Battleston Hill at Wisley in 1947, and their hardiness was monitored.(3) This collection was open to the full blast of the northeast wind, but sheltered from the north and west; more on the subject of hardiness later. The plants at Wisley generally performed well and were used to stage a large display at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show of 1958 where they created a great deal of interest.

In 1958 it was thought that the complete collections of “Wilson’s Fifty” were restricted to the three sets mentioned above; however, it seems likely that three others existed at this time. At Exbury Gardens a set was planted around one of the ponds to provide a kaleidoscope of colour reflections in the water in early May. It is known from the recollections of Mrs. Lionel de Rothschild that the azaleas were *in situ* in the spring of 1923 when some distinguished visitors were visibly impressed while being shown around the newly completed gardens. This suggests that Lionel de Rothschild also received an early shipment of Kurumes from Wilson.

The remnants of what appear to be two further sets can be found, one at Lingholm Gardens, near Keswick, Cumbria, and the other at Colonsay House Garden at Kiloran on the Isle of Colonsay. There are probably others, and we will return to this aspect shortly.



May 1991. Part of the remnants of a “Wilson’s Fifty” collection at Lingholm in the English Lake District. Note how these Kurumes are far more open and leggy when grown in partial shade. A second group can be found on the north end of the terrace, and these are low and compact due to their location in full sun.

(All photos by John Hammond)

John B. Stevenson and the Kurume Azaleas from Yokohama Nurseries

On the highest part of Tower Hill was planted a large collection of Kurume azaleas, which in flower mingled together like a Persian carpet, and this area became known as the “Kurume Carpet.” These were the 80 Kurume azaleas that Stevenson introduced direct from Yokohama

Nurseries in 1927-29. For many years there had been suggestions that some of plants in the “Wilson’s Fifty” collection were not good performers, at least not in the British climate, and visitors to Japan had returned with suggestions that with hindsight a better selection was practicable. So, Koichiro Wada made a selection of Kurumes on behalf of Stevenson, who did not give English names to the collection. By the mid-1930s Tower Court had probably the most complete collection of rhododendron species in the world, but what was really special about this garden was the rhododendron species were arranged in their series so the plants raised from seed brought back by the great plant collectors could be directly compared. And, in the same way, the Kurume azaleas could be directly compared. Roza always maintained that those from Yokohama Nurseries were better performers than “Wilson’s Fifty,” a perspective that was not wasted on many of her visitors each spring.(5)

Over the years John B. Stevenson had taken more than a passing interest in the rhododendron plantings in the Woodland and Valley Gardens in the Royal Park at Windsor. In 1946, when consideration was being given to developing a vast semi-circular amphitheatre area in the Great Park, he was shown the site by Eric Savill, the Deputy Ranger and Deputy Surveyor. Stevenson’s first comment was, “What a wonderful site to grow Kurume azaleas.” So it was that the plans quickly took shape, Stevenson then and there agreeing to provide the stock plants of “Wilson’s Fifty” for propagation purposes. Of the original “Wilson’s Fifty” around twelve were discarded, as possibly being liable to frost damage when planted in a bowl, and it is clear from later reports that these varieties were replaced by some of “Stevenson’s Collection.” The garden staff at Windsor rated Wilson’s ‘Kure no Yuki’ [‘Kure-no-yuki’] and Stevenson’s ‘Haru no Kyokii’ [‘Haru-no-kyokii’] amongst the best performers and exhibited these at the RHS Rhododendron Shows in London. The “mixture” of Kurumes used to create the “Bowl” at Windsor would later cause some confusion as to the varieties that actually made up a full set of “Wilson’s Fifty.” Nevertheless, when planting was completed in 1950 over 50,000 plants had been used in creating the “Kurume Punch Bowl.”(4) If you are visiting London in late April or early May, this is a location you should definitely consider including in your itinerary!

John Barr Stevenson died suddenly in 1950 leaving Roza virtually penniless, with a substantial mortgage outstanding, a financial nightmare. That she rose to the occasion and gradually disposed of a large portion of the rhododendron species collection, a major portion finding its way to Windsor as the foundation of the Valley Garden, is well documented.(4)

The Establishment of Other Collections of Kurumes Post-WWII

In 1949-50, James Fisher, Superintendent of Hampton Court Gardens, initiated work on the creation of a woodland garden at the Isabella Plantation, an area within

Richmond Park that formed part of an ancient deer park. After three years of quiet transformation, from a bracken-covered impenetrable wilderness beneath a 19th Century canopy of mature oaks, beech, and chestnut, the gardens were opened without ceremony one morning in March 1953. At this date the gardens contained a new collection of rhododendrons, azaleas, magnolias, and camellias. Isabella has become well-known for its stunning display of ever-green azaleas that transform the garden each spring, many of which are Kurume azaleas, and this led to a decision in 1991 to establish a collection of "Wilson's Fifty" there. To add to those already growing at Isabella, many varieties were acquired from Arthur George at Hydon's Nursery, while John Bond, Director of Gardens at the Savill and Valley Gardens at Windsor, provided cutting material of others. So, through the generosity of others, who have themselves been helped in times gone by, the wheel has come full circle and another complete collection has been born. This set of "Wilson's Fifty" has subsequently been given National Plant Collection status by the National Council for the Conservation of Plants and Gardens (NCCPG).

It was inevitable that the development of the "Kurume Punch Bowl" at Windsor would create a great deal of interest in the Kurume azaleas, particularly amongst the key rhododendron enthusiasts of the era. But there was a problem; the Kurume collections were not readily available in the trade. Harry White, one of the great rhododendron growers, had been manager of Sunningdale Nurseries since 1898, and he had needed to cope with the vast inflow of species from China, Tibet, and Burma. The work involved in raising, classifying, and labelling collectors' seed would have brought White into regular contact with the Stevensons, who resided close by at Ascot. Sunningdale was a beautiful stylish nursery in the Victorian/Edwardian tradition. By the time of Harry White's death in 1936 some outlying areas of the nurseries had become overgrown and were no longer in use, while other areas had become run-down and neglected. Sir Hubert Longman, the publisher, had bought Sunningdale as an investment, but when he passed away in 1939, at the outset of WWII, most of the staff were sacked. Major Herbert Russell and his cousin, Neil Hamilton Smith, purchased the nurseries, but without any staff were unable to tackle its restoration until after the cessation of hostilities. However, Major Russell's son, James Russell, who became a highly regarded plantsman and garden designer, was invalided out of the Herefordshire Yeomanry in 1942 and resumed civilian life. Following a period of convalescence he was given the task of managing the nurseries. James Russell set about restoring the nurseries as and when staff could be secured, and he also sought to maintain the friendly relationship with Tower Court, as he had visited the gardens on a number of occasions prior to the onset of WWII.

In the early 1950s James Russell obtained plant material of Stevenson's Yokohama introductions and in an article written in 1984, he confirmed that he had also obtained plant material of "Wilson's Fifty" from Roza Stevenson.(7)

Roza used the firm of Strathern & Blair, solicitors, of Edinburgh, to handle her affairs following the death of her husband. An invoice dated August 1951, with a covering letter dated 3 October 1951, was forwarded to James Russell seeking payment for items that Sunningdale Nurseries had been supplied with from Tower Court. Included in this listing is an item for an unspecified quantity of scions taken on 2 August 1951 for which the charge was £47-15-00; the plants involved are not identified. This appears to be the first transaction that Russell had with Tower Court. In regard to the transactions that took place sometime later, the plants involved are all rhododendrons, and these are identified. The timing of this first transaction suggests that this was with respect to "Stevenson's Collection" and "Wilson's Fifty." Looking at the later transactions, Roza charged an average price of one shilling each for scions, so the original transaction probably represented a total of around 1000 scions.(12)

It makes sense that Roza Stevenson would not have wanted to be involved in propagating these plants for wider distribution. So, Sunningdale Nurseries propagated the Kurumes, listed them in their catalogue, and supplied them to the key gentlemen enthusiasts of the era with gardens large enough to accommodate them, either as groups of plants or as part of one of James Russell's many garden design projects that increasingly occupied his time in the years after 1950.(9) There were five of "Stevenson's Collection" that Russell did not list in the catalogue, and it is assumed that these were not considered suitable for distribution. This included the oddly named 'Shjuchuke'. However, it would be pertinent to note that while the "Wilson's Fifty" collection has become synonymous with



Tremeer, a Cornish 14th Century country house constructed of local granite, has weathered well across the centuries. Running along the base of the terrace is a large collection of Kurumes from Yokohama Nurseries that was introduced by John B. Stevenson (seen in April 2002).

the “Kurume Punch Bowl” at Windsor and has thus enjoyed wide media coverage, the converse is true with regard to “Stevenson’s Collection,” which thus remains relatively little known.

The Kurumes Find a New Home

Roza’s many friends rejoiced when it became known in 1960 that she was moving to Cornwall and her engagement to Major-General Eric Harrison, of Tremeer, was unexpectedly announced. Not only was this “green fingered” lady an expert at raising plants from seed and cuttings, she could classify and document all the material that passed through her hands. So, Tower Court was sold, and many of the remaining plants found their way to her new home, an historic 14th Century property near St. Tudy, Cornwall. Roza takes up the story in 1965 (see photo on page 54):

When I arrived in Cornwall in 1961 to my new abode Tremeer, I brought some of my favourite rhododendrons and plants from my late home Tower Court, Ascot, Berks. My husband and I wanted some colour on the lawn beneath the terrace wall, but whatever we chose had to be ultimately of moderate height.

I suggested Kurume azaleas for they love the sun, flower abundantly each year and possess an added glory, namely variation of foliage not only in shape but when shedding their secondary foliage. They also have most beautiful autumn tints from yellow, gold, bronze, red, etc.

I also felt these plants in the Cornish climate would stand full exposure, as compared with the Berkshire climate where it is essential to have dappled shade; there the atmosphere is very different. It can be extremely hot and the sunrays can scorch the delicate shades, in particular the salmon and flame colours.

We made two beds each to contain twenty-five plants of the Yokohama lot these Kurumes are the original ones which my late husband imported from Yokohama Nurseries from 1927 to 1929, so we can say that are around forty years old and now measure 5 to 7 feet across.

To come to a quite different climate as fully mature plants speaks well for their constitution; they have behaved remarkably well during these last four years; only one thing worries me, the climate here being more humid, particularly during winter months, their sap never goes down, consequently, flowers burst forth at odd times! I always fear some appalling frost will appear during February, then bark split is likely to ensue.

However they withstood the drastic 1963 winter, when nearly everyone all over the British Isles suffered burst pipes! And many other calamities and upon thinking back, I recollect we had a superb October (Indian



The long terrace at Tremeer provides an ideal sunny location for the colorful “Stevenson’s Collection” of the fifty varieties planted by Roza Stevenson in 1961 (shown in April 2002). The deep red is ‘Hinode-no-kumo’, that Roza rated as a better color than Wilson’s #42, ‘Hinodegiri’ (syn. ‘Red Hussar’).

Summer) which ripened their wood and young growths, followed by a normal very cold November which sent down their sap, consequently they withstood that very severe period. I may say I crowed a little for they had done what I hoped they would do, and they did not let me down!(6)

So, 50 of the original large plants of the Yokohama Nursery introductions found a new home at Tremeer, and all survived the move (see photo above). Roza had made a selection from the original 80 varieties that had been imported, but at the time of writing there is not a list available of the plants at Tremeer. In 1969, Patrick M. Synge, reporting on a visit to Tremeer, noted :

In the two main beds were planted Kurumes amongst the finest I noted were :

‘Shino Miyagino’ [‘Shino-miyagino’], deep pink, slightly deeper than ‘Hinomayo’ and very floriferous.

‘Senjo’, apple blossom pink, very lovely.

‘Fude Tsukata’ [‘Fude-tsukasa’], pretty pale pink, late flowering.

‘Hino Tsukasa’ [‘Hino-tsukasa’], deep scarlet red.

‘Gyokuko’, apricot-red with small flowers.

‘Harumiji’, white.

‘Yozakura’, deep pink.

‘Shintsune’, a good white.

‘Haru no Akebono’ [‘Haru-no-akebono’], pink, late flowering.

‘Iwato Kagami’ [‘Iwatokagami’], pale pink.

These are comparatively little known but are all good plants, capable of spectacular effect.(8)

We know from the above report that Roza took 'Haru no Akebono' ['Haru-no-akebono'], with her to Tremeer and there is little doubt that she would have been thrilled to see one of her favourite azaleas on the cover of *The Azalean*.

This leaves us to speculate what happened to the other 30 original plants of "Stevenson's Collection." In 1960, faced with the disposal of the Tower Court property, Roza decided to have a sale of the remaining plants. When James Russell became aware of the pending sale he wrote to Roza on 14th September and indicated he was interested in acquiring some of the rare plants left in the garden as he felt it was important they should be kept together as a group and he suggested a date for a visit. He also indicated he was interested in the evergreen azaleas as Tower Court was possibly the only source. Roza replied on 28th September in a positive way, but there is no record of the plants that James Russell subsequently acquired.(12) Shortly before Roza sold Tower Court, Arthur George of Hydon Nurseries was also given the opportunity of acquiring the remaining rhododendrons and azaleas in the garden that were surplus to Roza Stevenson's needs at Tremeer. This offer was enthusiastically accepted; and, along with a large number of rhododendrons, around half of a full set of "Wilson's Fifty" found their way to Hydon's Nurseries, near Godalming, Surrey. Roza had taken the other half of "Wilson's Fifty" with her to Tremeer and planted these in a separate bed.(6)

The Distribution of "Stevenson's Collection" in Later Years

Sadly, Roza Harrison passed away in 1968 after a long illness that she fought with tremendous spirit. General Eric Harrison stayed on at Tremeer for another 10 years until maintaining the garden became too much for him.

In 1978 the Haslam-Hopwood Family acquired the property, and they continued to look after the garden, adding new plantings that helped the garden survive in a reasonable condition. In 2001 the property was purchased by Lord and Lady Edward George, who immediately commenced renovating the house interior and intended to restore the garden at a later date.

The George Family value their privacy and, in the Spring of 2002, by means of a "one-time" special arrangement with Lady Vanessa George, the author took a group from the Scottish Chapter-ARS to Tremeer for a conducted tour with the Head Gardener. In many ways it was just as though time had stood still; the two beds of Kurumes that originated from Yokohama Nurseries were still very much in evidence beneath the terrace, as were many of Roza's rhododendron hybrids. Unfortunately, there was not time during the visit to search for labels on the azaleas, although by chance several original labels were located on the rhododendrons.(10)

When Russell sold the Sunningdale Nurseries in 1968, as a result of a disagreement with his cousin, and went to live

at Castle Howard near York, he took 21 varieties of "Wilson's Fifty" with him and 21 of "Stevenson's Collection." What is interesting is that three of the latter were mature plants. For example, 'Mikaera Zakura' ['Mkaera-zakura'] is noted as being 4' x 3', and this suggests that Russell did acquire the remaining 30 plants from Tower Court. Also, Russell chose to take with him six plants raised from cuttings of the oddly named 'Shjuchuke,' so this plant must have intrigued him in some way.(7) Some of the Kurumes were planted in Ray Wood and others around his home, but many of the plants at Castle Howard were relocated during Russell's lifetime; an exercise is currently in hand to reassess the whole of the Russell Rhododendron Collection and to identify all the extant plants. It would appear that the availability in the trade of Stevenson's introductions ceased at the time Russell sold Sunningdale.

James Russell visited Fred C. Galle at Callaway Gardens, Georgia, on 28-29th October, 1980, and he returned to Castle Howard with a listing of 33 Kurume azaleas that Galle was looking to obtain. This listing included 19 of "Stevenson's Collection," but as Russell had only taken 21 of the collection with him to Castle Howard he was only able to supply Galle with 12 of those on the list. In a letter dated 10th November, 1980 Russell wrote:

I also enclose a photocopy of the colour descriptions of the Azaleas I used to grow at Sunningdale. These were pretty carefully recorded. The evergreen azaleas had, some of them, been at the nursery since around 1910, *Macrantha* (and *Amoenum*) had been introduced by the nursery through Fortune in the 19th Century. A great bulk of the collection came from Tower Court and a certain number from my old cousin Hamilton Smith, who also did a lot of importing from Japan. It is sad to think that the source of all this has now been destroyed.(12)

Galle then wrote to Russell indicating he was heavily involved in taking forward an update of *The Azalea Book* by Frederic Lee and sent Russell a specimen data sheet to be completed for each of the azaleas in the Sunningdale listings, previously supplied. This information was collated and returned with a letter dated 30 September, 1981. A batch of Kurume cuttings was sent to Galle by Russell on 29 September, 1981, and was received in good condition. Unfortunately, while nearly all the cuttings rooted, there were other problems, as Galle explains in a letter dated February 28, 1983:

I made a visit to Japan for azaleas and plants and asked that your azaleas be re-labeled and moved to the lath house. The plants were moved. In fact I found out twice before getting to the lath house, and when I found them last fall, only one plant of each had a label nearby, instead of wired on. I am not sure I can straighten them out this spring. Frankly, I was sick, mad and damned disgusted but we have had considerable changes here and I guess it's par.

In his reply Russell offered to root a further batch of cuttings to straighten out the labelling, but Galle did not take up the offer in his later letters; neither is there any indication that Galle was able to correct the labelling himself. Russell also invited Galle to come over to visit the gardens and see the azaleas, but Galle's response indicated that while he would have loved to take up the offer he was unable to do so due to other commitments.⁽¹²⁾ No other records have been found to date that indicate other shipments of plants were sent to the US of "Stevenson's Collection" of Kurumes.

Conclusion

This tale has taken us on a journey across the latter 80 years of the last century and has been a means of bringing together a diverse number of reference sources to enable a more cohesive perspective to be written on the Stevenson introductions. In this journey some thought-provoking items, including the letters and documents connected with Roza Stevenson, Fred Galle, and Jim Russell, have played an important role in the tale, and provide us with a fascinating glimpse of times gone by.

Undoubtedly, plants of "Stevenson's Collection" will exist in old gardens in Britain and Ireland, some of which Jim Russell will have been commissioned to landscape, whereas owners of other estates will have purchased plants direct from Sunningdale Nursery. At the time of writing only four of "Stevenson's Collection" introductions are available "in the trade" in Britain; however, some nurseries may well have stock plants available to them that are not being propagated. While it is now around 40 years since the collections of Stevenson's introductions were broken up at both Tower Court and Sunningdale Nurseries, it should still be practicable to re-establish a significant collection of these plants and gain NCCPG status for what is an historically significant group of Kurumes.

Perhaps the last word belongs to Jim Russell, who played the role of facilitator in this story for the better part of 40 years. In 1992, towards the end of his life, when reminiscing about his visits to the gardens at Tower Court at the invitation of John and Roza Stevenson, to compare the performance of various forms of rhododendrons and azaleas, he recalled:

During the great influx of collected seed between the wars there were many large gardens able to grow very large numbers of seedlings and to select the best form with the largest and most brightly coloured flowers. The inevitable neglect caused by the war destroyed or damaged these collections and the only one to survive more or less intact was the late J.B. Stevenson's at Tower Court. Here, in dry, sandy, acid soil at 300' (91m) above sea level, some 80 acres (32ha) were planted in expeditions, with anything up to 50 plants from a single collection [number]. Your host was apt to ask, "Shall we go for a walk in Kingdon-Ward 1926 this afternoon?"

It would be wonderful to be able to say that again today.

John Hammond's interests in propagating and cultivating azaleas and rhododendrons stretch back over 30 years, although he has been involved with gardens for considerably longer. He is particularly interested in the history of old azalea and rhododendron gardens and encouraging their restoration. He is Vice-President of the Scottish Rhododendron Society, ARS Alternate Director at Large, and a frequent contributor to the Journal, ARS.

[The continuation of this article will be published in the Winter 2006 issue of The Azalean, Ed.]

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Society News

Chapter News

Louisiana Chapter

The chapter has been actively involved in the Garden Party honoring Ms. Margie Jenkins and the dedication of a new azalea garden in her honor at the LSU AgCenter in Hammond, Louisiana. (See article on p. 59)

Northern Virginia Chapter

Frances Louer, Corresponding Secretary

The chapter held their annual cutting exchange on July 9th at the home of Eve and Bob Harrison in Luray, Virginia. President Dan Krabill promoted this activity to all chapter members as a way to gain new plants, especially the hard-to-come-by ones.

The annual plant auction was held on August 27th at Phran's Azalea Trails (home of the Philip Louers) in Haymarket, Virginia.

Oconee Chapter

Frank Bryan, Newsletter Editor

Buddy Lee, President of the ASA, visited the chapter meeting held August 13th to help members prepare for fall collection and propagation of Oconee azaleas (*Rhododendron flammeum*). While Buddy was there he updated the members on current issues and the future of the ASA.

Vaseyi Chapter

John Brown, Secretary Reporting

Dr. Joe Coleman brought us a tiny part of his knowledge and enthusiasm on Sunday September 24 with his talk, "Dependably Old and Excitingly New: Kurume Azaleas." He covered the oldest of the hybrid evergreen groups, going from their introduction during the Pacific Exposition at the start of the last century through the introductions by Wilson; importation by the Domotos and Stevenson of several groups; then all the way up to the newest exploration by Dr. John Creech and the latest introductions by the US National Arboretum. Joe's slides covered all the color combinations available.

Joe is currently serving as a member of the ASA board of directors and has been a member of the Society since its second year of existence when George Harding introduced him to the group.

The chapter's board met August 24 to set up the schedule for the meetings for 2007.

In Memory

Walter Galloway Burch

H. M. "Fuzzy" Perritt reported that Alabamense Chapter member Walter Galloway Burch died June 4, 2006, at age 79. He said:

"Walt lived across the creek from me and was noted for his wildlife photography. He has thousands of pictures of everything from Alaskan Brown Bear to hummingbirds and from wildflowers to magnificent forest and mountain scenes. I did the eulogy at his funeral and it was a tough challenge. Walt is really going to be missed up this way."

Dr. Ben Reid

Jim Thornton of the Oconee Chapter reports with sadness:

"Dr. Ben Reid passed away July 1, 2006, at the age of 81, at his home, after a battle with leukemia. Ben was a long-time member of the ASA and the Oconee Chapter. He was a retired military man, a retired educator, and a retired azaleophile. He and his wife Lina owned and operated Reid's Azalea Farm, where they raised, sold, and collected thousands of azaleas, with hundreds of varieties for landscaping and propagation purposes. Their garden was always open to the public; and, on more than one occasion, the Oconee Chapter held their annual "cutting party" at their place. He was always willing to share his "secrets." He will surely be missed!"

Helen Schroeder

Larry Miller of the Tri-State Chapter reported that Helen Schroeder of Evansville, Indiana, age 81, died September 20, 2006. She was Tri-State Chapter's original secretary. Her husband, Dr. Henry R. Schroeder, Jr. was a well-known Evansville hybridizer of cold-tolerant azaleas, and he named one of his compact, very double purplish pink hybrids 'Mrs. Henry Schroeder' for her.

George William Wood, Jr.

Bob Kelly of the Alabamense Chapter reported that George William Wood, Jr. of Northport, Alabama, age 87, died July 17, 2006 at home.

Mr. Wood was a highly decorated World War II veteran. He was the founder of the Alabama Wildflower Society and editor of their newsletter and was associated with the Tanglewood Arboretum at the University of Alabama. He was the forester for the University of Alabama from 1959 to 1987.

Bob Stelloh contributed that he had also noticed that Mr. Wood had bought gift memberships for a number of our members, including Caroline Dean who is a friend of Bob's and, it turns out, was a really good friend of George. She has a strong interest in wildflowers as well as azaleas and lives in Opelika, Alabama.

Hammond Research Station to Establish New Azalea Garden Honoring Margie Y. Jenkins

Friends of Margie Y. Jenkins hosted a Garden Party to honor the lifetime contributions of "Ms. Margie" during the year of her 85th birthday. Monies raised from the party will be used for the establishment and maintenance of the Margie Y. Jenkins Azalea Garden. Ms. Margie is nationally known as a long-time azalea lover, breeder, and authority.

The Margie Y. Jenkins Azalea Garden will be established on a five-acre site under mature pines at the LSU AgCenter's Hammond Research Station, Hammond, Louisiana. This major azalea collection will provide a garden where the consumer and professional can view and learn about plant types and habits; flower colors, sizes, and forms; and bloom seasons and lengths for different azalea species and cultivars. Also to be included in this educational garden will be a Japanese maple collection and native understory shrubs and trees.

"I viewed the Garden Party as an opportunity to celebrate the many contributions this dynamic woman has made to horticulture, the Green Industry, and to the personal development and education of so many horticulturists," says Regina P. Bracy, Resident Coordinator of the Hammond Research Station. "With the establishment of the Margie Y. Jenkins Azalea Garden, we will have a continuing feature in the Landscape Horticulture Research and Extension Center that will educate people about azaleas, much as Ms. Margie has done during her lifetime."

The Garden Party was held at the LSU AgCenter's Hammond Research Station on October 26, 2006, at 4:30 p.m. Anyone wishing to contribute to the establishment and maintenance of the Margie Y. Jenkins Azalea Garden may contact Regina P. Bracy at 985-543-4125 or rbracy@agcenter.lsu.edu, or may send checks made out to LSU Ag Center to:

Hammond Research Station
21549 Old Covington Hwy.
Hammond, LA 70403

Announcing the New Editor of The Azalean

Pam Fitch of Lubbock, Texas, was recently named Editor of *The Azalean* by the board of directors. She takes over her duties with publication of the Winter 2006 issue.

A native of Bossier City, Louisiana, Fitch earned a Bachelor's Degree in Journalism from Stephen F. Austin State University. She previously served as Executive Director of the Nacogdoches Convention and Visitors Bureau in Nacogdoches, Texas. In this position, she helped create the nationally recognized Nacogdoches Azalea Trail to promote tourism to the community. The three-week event held annually in late March attracts thousands of visitors each year.



The centerpiece of the trail is the Ruby M. Mize Azalea Garden located on the campus of Stephen F. Austin State University. The garden is the largest of its kind in Texas and features more than 525 varieties of azaleas.

In 2004, under Fitch's leadership, Nacogdoches successfully applied for designation as an "Azalea City" by the Azalea Society of America. It was the first time the designation had been bestowed on a community. Fitch has also been involved in planning the 2007 Azalea Society of America's annual convention that will be held March 29 to April 1 in Nacogdoches.

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New Members

The Society welcomes the following members who joined the Society as of October 8, 2006. We also especially welcome the garden writers who we hope will contribute to *The Azalean* from time to time.

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2007 ASA Convention Azaleas in the Pines — A Texas Garden Party

Barbara Stump — Nacogdoches, Texas

This next spring the 2007 convention organizing committee will welcome you to a Texas you may not know...Not the land of sagebrush, desert colors, and cowboys. Not even the huge oil-based metropolis of Houston. No, our area of Texas, the Pineywoods ecological region, is rich in trees, verdant in foliage, and just the right size for friendly people and specialty nurseries. Located geographically in northeast Texas (130 miles north of Houston, 200 miles southeast of Dallas-Fort Worth, 300 miles east of Austin, 340 miles east of San Antonio, and 96 miles west of Shreveport, Louisiana), Nacogdoches has been a crossroads for Native Americans, Anglo settlers, and commerce for 300 years. Nacogdoches is a stop on El Camino Real (the King's Highway, now Highway 21), which began as a network of Indian trails and was designated as a National Historic Trail in 2004. The combined threads of plant diversity and history run consistently through all the events planned for the 28th ASA convention.

Our garden party will show you plenty of azaleas in our loblolly pine forests and gardens in two towns, Nacogdoches (home of Stephen F. Austin State University-SFA) and nearby Tyler (home of the Texas Rose Festival). Because the Texas Chapter of the ASA is still in a reorganizational mode, SFA's Mast Arboretum is hosting this convention, with big help on the plant sale from the Louisiana Chapter.

Local Plant Diversity and Climate

Physically, you will be in East Texas, a region that encompasses 62,600 square miles (38% of the total area of Texas) and runs from the Arkansas border on the north, to the Louisiana border to the east, and nearly to Austin and Houston on the west and south. To say that our area is rich in diversity is an understatement. The native and established introductions listed by the *Flora of East Texas* number 3,402 species, slightly more than two-thirds of the flora for the whole state of Texas.

Our climate is USDA Zone 8b, nearly tropical, with average annual rainfall of 45-50 inches, hours of frost rather than weeks or months of it, and soil that is typically acidic sandy loam. This means we have to chill tulips in the fridge if we want to grow them, but we can plant amaryllis and narcissus bulbs out to perennialize at will. Even with 17°F last Christmas, sweet potato vines

(*Ipomoea batatas*) just made bigger tubers and are more robust as ground covers this year. So, our plants have to be able to tolerate some cold, along with lots of heat and humidity; we mulch in fall *and* summer. The average high and low temperatures you can expect during the convention should be between 68°F and 53°F, but we'll update the current data on the convention Web site.

All this adds up to a very long growing season (between 120 and 150 days over 86°F each year) in a transition zone that lies between the eastern deciduous forest and the central North American grasslands. Azaleas thrive here, especially the large-leaved Southern Indicas that make a big statement in the landscape and the very floriferous Kurumes from Japan. It has been interesting to see how well the Ohio-born Girard azaleas, the late-blooming Satsuki, and the Huang hybrids from China have adapted here. These growing conditions are also nearly perfect for remontant hydrangeas and roses, and, of course, for the repeat-blooming Encore® azaleas. So, come to East Texas for an early spring (March 28-April 1) and return home in time for a second spring in your own gardens.

Special Hosts

The SFA Mast Arboretum is teaming with the Nacogdoches Convention & Visitors Bureau, the Tyler Council of Garden Clubs, and the ASA Louisiana Chapter to host this Texas garden party. This means we will have even more diversity in the plant material for the plant auction and many people who are very keen on making sure you have a great time at our convention. Please see the convention insert (following page 66) for details about how to get to Nacogdoches.

Speakers

Speakers have been chosen to emphasize the diversity of plant materials, history, and legacy of the gardens we will be seeing. (See following article.)

Tours

You will get a little flavor of college days on our bus tours, since we will be using SFA team buses for most of the transportation. Continuing the collegiate theme, we will have one "Away Day" and one "Home Day."

"Away Day" — Friday, March 30, 2007

Bright and early on Friday, we will board our purple-and-white (SFA colors) buses for the trip to Tyler, home of a 27-year-old Azalea Trail. It will be an enjoyable drive of a little over an hour through the rolling East Texas countryside, but it will really be worth it. To be sure to pack everything in, we will be asking you to get your coffee, tea, or juice early and board the buses for a "traveling breakfast" on the way.

Tyler Rose Garden/IDEA Gardens

Our first visit is the world-famous municipal rose park, the *Tyler Rose Garden*, a 1938 Works Project Administration (WPA) project, enhanced by American Rose Society rosarians who also helped Tyler develop its rose-growing industry (photo below). The site includes WPA-era stone picnic pavilion, balcony, and stairs, and the Rose Garden Center and Rose Museum dedicated in 1992. The Tyler newspaper stated, "This is the largest municipal park and rose garden ever approved by the WPA." One serious challenge to the plantings was the soil, which was essentially a "red clay gully." You will hear more of this story on our tour of the gardens.



In 1955 an All-America Rose Selection Trial Garden was established here, one of over 25 located in various geographical areas throughout the US. Important results have come about through these trials. Due to the heat of Smith County's summer, certain viruses in specific rose cultivars were more readily detected than in cooler climates. Dr. Eldon Lyle, plant pathologist for the Texas Rose Research Foundation and the test garden judge for 39 years, reported these findings to the AARS, and the nurseries propagating the cultivars were able to take action against the viruses.

The garden now is planted with 30,000 rose bushes, featuring over 450 cultivars! The peak bloom period for roses in Tyler is October, when the Rose Festival events, including the Queen's Tea, take place. The Tyler Council of Garden Clubs is hosting a welcome reception in the foyer of Rose Garden Center, so be sure to enjoy the com-

pany of some of our newest ASA members. There is a gift shop, as well.

Also at the Rose Garden site are the **Smith County Master Gardeners' IDEA Gardens**, which are a series of small gardens that display various good gardening methods and new planting combinations (photo below). The content of these gardens changes as needed. There are examples of new pathway and bench materials, backyard composting facilities, and plantings of new small ornamental trees. Several **Master Gardeners** will be on hand to interpret the current features of the gardens. There is also a nice display of roses and Japanese maples on the wooded hillside facing the Rose Garden.



Ina Brundrett Azalea Garden at Tyler Junior College

This garden at Tyler Junior College (TJC) was featured in the Winter 2005 issue of *The Azalean* (photo below). Designed by ASA member Naud Burnett, it is in its second year of growth and beautifully frames an entrance to the college. It is amazing to think how this garden used to be nothing but a driveway and a neglected parking lot. The success of this garden is just the beginning of a total "campus arboretum" concept that TJC is working to achieve. Tyler Mayor Joey Seeber and some members of the local press will meet us here, because they are very



interested in the ASA coming to visit Tyler. TJC Development Director Mitch Andrews and Mrs. Brundrett will also outline some of the future garden phases in our brief stop at this growing junior college.

Short Bus Tour of Tyler Azalea Trail

We will drive by some of the eight miles of the lush Tyler Azalea Trail gardens on our way to lunch. One reason for visiting Tyler on Friday is to avoid the crush of traffic that happens on the weekends. Over 100,000 visitors drive or walk by these 150 homes each year.

Lunch Stop and Tyler Azalea Trail Gardens

We will lunch in the dining room of the 1932-vintage Tyler Woman's Building. It is located in the heart of the Azalea District, an officially registered historic district dedicated to residences with wonderful azalea gardens that agree to be on the Azalea Trail tours. Since lunch will be served buffet-style, you can either eat before or after you walk around the block to see two other beautiful gardens.

Pyron Garden

Just two doors down (at 212 W. Dobbs Street) is the Guy and Joan Pyron Garden (photo below). This garden is a jewel of colorful companion plants, pink azaleas along a masonry-lined creek bed done by the owner, and a lovely new Arts-and-Crafts-inspired pergola. This garden has been featured in *Southern Living* and *Texas Highways*.



The Children's Garden

Kitty-corner from the Woman's Building is The Children's Garden, which began as a wonderful garden memorial project for a particular child and has grown to commemorate all children. Developed by a local citizens' fund-raising effort, through the Children are a Gift Foundation, the completed park was donated to the City of Tyler in October 2004. The design is fully ADA-accessible, and features lots of stonework and fountains in which children can play.

Final Garden Visit

Our last garden visit for the day will be **Ravenwood**, the home of Mr. and Mrs. Elmer Ellis (photo below). Begun in the 1930s, the six very formal gardens highlight the Georgian Colonial home. The color scheme is pink and white, with a formal drive, reflection pool, and mirrored garden room. Approximately 1,500 azaleas (including 'Pride of Mobile', 'Hinodegiri', and 'Pink Elegans') are accented by sculptured crape myrtle, dogwood, pecan, and live oak trees. The gardens are a part of the Smithsonian Institution-Archives of American Gardens, and the home is a Tyler Historic Landmark. The Ellises frequently use this setting for medical community fund-raising and we thank them for very graciously opening their garden to us. (Shown in photo below are Betsy Ellis, left, and Tyler convention coordinator Jo Ann Smith.)



Return Home and Evening Festivities

We'll bid Tyler goodbye and head home. The evening begins with a Tex-Mex buffet dinner with cash bar to help everyone relax for the rest of the convention and the evening's speakers.



"Home Day" — Saturday, March 31, 2007

The bus trips this day will be really short, since we are staying within five miles of our convention hotel, The Fredonia Hotel & Convention Center. We'll begin with a leisurely buffet breakfast, at which you really can get all you can eat. Then we'll take our buses to the SFA Mast Arboretum Ruby M. Mize Azalea Garden.

Ruby M. Mize Azalea Garden

The last time the ASA heard about this garden—in 2000, during my keynote speech at the Charleston, South Carolina, convention—the garden was in its infancy, and I talked about what we were planning to plant. Now the eight-acre naturalistically designed garden is six years

continued on page 65

What is an Azalea Trail?

Azalea trails have been a feature of several Southern cities for a long time. Just as with the ASA, these events promote the use of azaleas in the landscape and highlight gardens, both public and private, that have large and/or unique displays. Typically there are other educational or fun events scheduled during the peak azalea bloom period. The more events, the more promotional effort spent in informing the public about these events, the more tourists visit, the greater is the economic impact for the host communities. For example, Nacogdoches Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB) did an economic impact analysis of the 2005 Nacogdoches Azalea Trail, coming to the conclusion that 5,000 people visited Nacogdoches during the Azalea Trail, resulting in \$425,000 in direct spending locally. Much of this spending was generated by the CVB's aggressive marketing of the Azalea Trail to tour group operators who scheduled many overnight stays in local hotels. Of course, gardeners must plant their yards and public gardens full of azaleas so the visitors have plenty to see. So, an Azalea Trail is like a garden; it needs constant tending, nurturing, and renewal.

As you ASA members make your way to our convention in East Texas, you may want to include the following Azalea Trails and associated events along your route. This list is by no means comprehensive. If you know of others, write about them and send your articles to the Editor of *The Azalean* for future publication.

Mobile, Alabama. The ASA convention visited this city filled with azaleas in 1999. There has been an Azalea Trail here for 75 years, with many streets lined with the rich colors of Southern Indicas and Formosa azaleas. According to Bill Finch, Environmental Editor for the *Mobile Register*, Mobile was one of a circuit of cities in the 1920s to which people would drive to see large displays of azaleas. Cities as far apart as Charleston, South Carolina; Tallahassee, Florida; and Shreveport, Louisiana; were major stops on "The Trail." Mobile's 35-mile Azalea Trail winds through areas of beautiful homes and gardens in town during the end of March-early April, and includes Bellingrath Gardens' 65 acres and Mobile Botanic Gardens' New Rhododendron and Azalea Garden. In addition, from March 21-25, 2007, the Providence Foundation Festival of Flowers, also held in Mobile, carries on the tradition of encouraging people to create beautiful gardens.

Houston, Texas. The River Oaks Garden Club, founded in 1927, has been organizing their Azalea Trail for 70 years. The private home tours often include homes that have been lavishly decorated for the event; some of the gardens display the work of landscape architects. The Bayou Bend Gardens are unique in that they have been maintained to the period 1940-1950, and keep to the plant palette of the original landscape designer for philanthropist Ima Hogg, who donated her home and grounds to the River Oaks Garden Club. The house is also a well-known American decorative arts museum. Being in Zone 9, the dates are early: March 2-4, 2007; 11:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m. Tickets \$5-\$20 for tours of five private homes and gardens, the River Oaks Garden Club Forum of Civics Building and Gardens, and the Bayou Bend Gardens-Philadelphia Hall & Jones Visitor Center.

Tyler, Texas. Azaleas were first tested in Tyler in 1929 by nurseryman Maurice Shamburger. The test garden succeeded, and he

convinced Mrs. Sara Butler of the *Tyler Courier Times Telegraph* of the beautification potential of azaleas. Her garden inspired the planting of thousands of azaleas planted in the older sections of Tyler. In 1960 the Tyler Chamber of Commerce marked a five-mile trail by 60 homes with mature azaleas. By 2004, the extended eight-mile Tyler Azalea Trail included 150 homes and attracted 100,000 visitors. There are a number of events associated with the Trail, including 24 costumed Azalea Belles who greet visitors at the homes, pose for pictures, and give out information year-round. 2007 dates: March 16-April 1, 2007.

Nacogdoches, Texas. The first Azalea Trail was organized in 2000 by the Nacogdoches CVB, in association with its board and local citizens. The 24 miles of trails wind through the four historic districts in town that have mature azaleas. Special events during the three-week season are the plant sale sponsored by local garden clubs and nurseries, the "Art of Floral Design" (with azaleas) exhibition, and an annual Azalea Symposium, sponsored by the SFA Mast Arboretum. The CVB schedules many special tours of the Ruby M. Mize Azalea Garden and other sites of interest in Nacogdoches, with volunteer "Tejas Greeters" as "Step-on Guides" who lead the tours. 2007 dates: March 17-31. [Note: *Tejas* means "all who are friends" in the Caddo language spoken by the Native Americans who lived in the region of New Spain that eventually became Texas; it is still the Spanish name of Texas, Ed.]

Contact Information

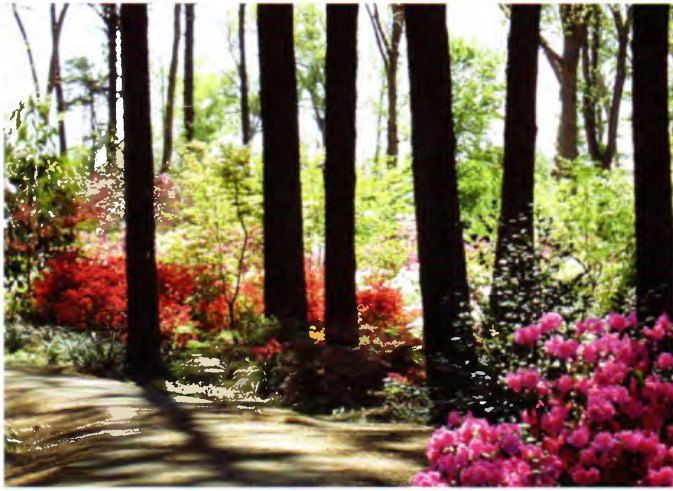
Bellingrath Gardens
12401 Bellingrath Road
Theodore, AL 36582
251-973-2217 or 800-247-8420
www.bellingrath.org

Houston Azalea Trail
River Oaks Garden Club
2503 Westheimer Road
Houston, TX 77098
713-523-2483
<http://www.riveroaksgardenclub.org/AzaleaTrail.cfm>

Mobile Botanical Gardens
5151 Museum Drive
Mobile, AL 36608
251-342-0555
<http://www.mobilebotanicalgardens.org/>

Nacogdoches Convention & Visitors Bureau
200 E. Main Street
Nacogdoches, TX 75961
www.visitnacogdoches.com

Tyler Azalea Trail
Tyler Convention & Visitors Bureau
315 N. Broadway Ave.
Tyler, TX 75701
800-235-5712
<http://www.tylerazaleatrail.com/trailinfo.htm>
e-mail: jturner@tylertexas.com



older, and we've met most of our goals and then some (photo above). As a result of that speech, we were given several thousand more azaleas from ASA member-nurserymen in Alabama (Van der Giessen Nursery), Louisiana (George Johnson), and Texas (Pope's Nursery), and we have built 20 more beds, and planted many more collections. The 1.27 miles of trails are now asphalted and easy on the feet. This very colorful garden is truly a garden that exists as a legacy of people who *care, truly care* about azalea gardens: First, the ASA board informally agreed to adopt the garden as a project that the ASA could and should support. Second, a number of other ASA nurserymen and women have donated (or sold at cost) some completely unique specimens to make up most of the collections in the five beds of our "Azalea Cultivar Evaluation" area. Third, we have had the direct and personal support of a wonderful SFA alumna who created a dedicated endowment to support the continued development of the garden. There are 45 beds, over 8,500 plant specimens in the garden; of these 6,500 are azaleas, from 52 hybrid groups, and representing 525 named cultivars. With so much to see and talk about in this garden, we will spend the entire morning hours in this maturing garden. My Azalea Garden volunteers and I will have labeled the azaleas and the over 1,500 exotic Asian trees and shrubs; we will see how many you ASA members tell us we have to re-label! If you desire, you can also cross our lovely bridge to visit the 11 acres of the main Mast Arboretum gardens, as well.

Lunch in the Stump's Garden

A very quick bus ride through one of our four historic districts will bring you to a catered BBQ lunch at the restored 1901 Queen Anne style home of Mike and Barb Stump. Set high on Irion Hill (named for an early Nacogdoches settler, doctor, and surveyor), this home was built by Philip Sanders, a cotton broker. Talented craftsmen used heartwood of the then-plentiful Longleaf pine for paneling in the parlor, den, dining room, the beautiful staircase, and the second floor landing. Fully restored in 2002-2003, this home has 2.5 acres of garden in front of it that the Stumps have landscaped with an

eclectic mix of colorful azaleas and plants from the two SFA Mast Arboretum sales held each year. The plan of the garden was to mimic a typical Victorian "mixed shrub border," with comfortable strolling trails. You are invited to tour both the home and garden.



Nacogdoches Azalea Trail Tour

After lunch we will drive a portion of the 24-mile Nacogdoches Azalea Trail route through some of the most beautiful neighborhoods on the way to our final garden stop.

Nacconiche Gardens Nursery Tour

The buses will head out of town for just a little side-trip to Nacconiche Gardens (photo below), which carries unique heritage, hard-to-find, and Texas-adapted companion plants as well as deciduous azaleas. Owner Sue Ripley also offers garden design work done by SFA horticulture program graduate Nathan Unclebach and installation by long-time Nacogdoches gardener JoAnn Carter. Yes, you can buy plants at this stop, if you like, and then the buses will bring you back to the convention hotel.



We are lucky to have this wonderful niche nursery so close to Nacogdoches, so that we can tour it conveniently. Others within a 300-mile radius will be listed in the registration confirmation packets, just in case you would like visit them while traveling to or from the convention.

Plant Sale

Speaking of plants, we will have a collection of various sizes of deciduous azaleas, some new plants from Buddy Lee, and possibly even some camellias from the Louisiana Chapter. As soon as we have a listing of likely offerings, we will post them on the convention Web page. Since the SFA Mast Arboretum spring plant sale fund-raiser is being held April 14, there is no space for propagating our own azaleas, so we are relying on friends and local commercial sources. A few of the choice offerings from the Arboretum sale may be in the plant auction after the annual meeting, however. A few will be offered in *Dr. Creech's plant raffle* Thursday night. Keep your eyes open.

Note that on the convention schedule, *open hours for the plant sale are limited*. When the convention participants are on a bus, the plant sale will be closed. This is to save our volunteers' time and energy. However, there will be plenty of time Saturday afternoon for purchasing plants.

Annual Meeting, Banquet, Plant Auction

Saturday evening festivities will include all the required elements and as much fun as we can pack in!

Contact Info (More listed on Insert)

Convention Web Site (with links to more information on the gardens listed above.):
www.nacogdochesazaleas.com

SFA Mast Arboretum
Agriculture Building
PO Box 13000, Wilson Drive
Nacogdoches, TX 75962
<http://arboretum.sfasu.edu/>

Ruby M. Mize Azalea Garden
<http://azalea.sfasu.edu/>

El Camino Real de los Tejas National Historic Trail
Used by Native Americans, then French and Spanish explorers, this trail follows Highway 6 in Louisiana and Highway 21 in Texas, and became a main highway through Nacogdoches and then on to San Antonio and Mexico City.
<http://www.elcaminorealtx.com/>

Tyler Children's Garden
For photos, see <http://www.pbbase.com/mrd/>
For background on the foundation, visit
<http://www.childrenareagift.com/childrenspark.html>

Barbara Stump was awarded her MS in Agriculture for "Site Analysis and Design of the Ruby M. Mize Azalea Garden" in 2001. She continues to work part-time for the SFA Mast Arboretum, coordinating improvements to the Ruby M. Mize Azalea Garden and in general development projects for the Arboretum. She has been the editor for The Azalean since 1999, and now plans to devote all her energies to getting the gardens ready for the ASA Convention in March.

Convention Speakers

All of our speakers are talented horticulturists who enthusiastically "spread the word" about the richness of the plant world and the satisfaction to be gained from gardening. They also represent the continuing legacy that we as gardeners nurture every day.

Thursday Night, March 29

Dr. David Creech, "The SFA Mast Arboretum-Diversity Includes Azaleas." Dr. Creech, director of the Stephen F. Austin State University (SFA) Mast Arboretum and Regents Professor of Horticulture at SFA, will welcome us with an overview of the diversity of plants that grow in the East Texas Pineywoods and in the SFA Mast Arboretum.

Since coming to SFA and Nacogdoches in 1978, Dr. Creech's research and development history can best be described as diverse and busy. Trained in fruit and vegetables, most of his early career at SFA focused solely in that arena, and he still continues that interest with blueberry germplasm research with the USDA Agriculture Research Station in Poplarville, Mississippi. In 1985 he began to develop the Arboretum, which opened up

avenues for research with new ornamentals. Much of that work has involved evaluating new plant materials for Southern landscapes. He was president of the Texas Native Plant Society from 1991 to 1992. During this time he initiated the Arboretum's "Three Rs Program" ("Rescue, Research, and Reintroduction") to thoroughly research endangered Texas species. In 1998 these endangered plant trials were moved to the SFA Pineywoods Native Plant Center, now the Arboretum's fourth big garden project. In the same year he began work on what has become the Ruby M. Mize Azalea Garden. He has been very active in promoting practical experience for his students through the American Society of Horticulture Science competitions. Most recently he has been working with Chinese colleagues in the US and in China on *Taxodium*, blueberries, and pharmaceutical potentials of other plants, including *Camptotheca acuminata* and the ferns of the Hardy Fern Foundation.

Greg Grant, "East Texas Yard Art-Historic and Modern." Greg will regale us with a humorous overview of "garden architecture" made from old or found objects while intro-

ducing some of the typical plant material we will be seeing on our travels to Tyler on Friday.

Greg is a horticulturist with the SFA Pineywoods Native Plant Center. He is co-author of *Home Landscaping-Texas* (2004) and *The Southern Heirloom Garden* (1995), and is a frequent contributor to *Texas Gardener*, *Ornamental Outlook*, and *Neil Sperry's Gardens*. He has worked for two other botanic gardens: Mercer Arboretum and Botanic Gardens in Houston, and San Antonio Botanic Garden. His current assignment at the SFA PNPC allows him to garden with some of the native plants he first learned to love in nearby Arcadia, Texas.

Following Greg's talk we will hold a **Rare Plant Raffle**—This is an SFA Mast Arboretum stand-by; the rare plants come from Dr. Creech's Arboretum Shade House. Be sure to get a ticket at the door!

Friday Night, March 30

Robert (Buddy) Lee, "Azalea Revivals—The Rising Tide." Buddy will discuss many of the strains of azaleas that he has enjoyed, evaluated, and used in his long experience with breeding azaleas. He will also discuss some of the goals of his breeding work and may introduce some new azaleas.

Buddy is the president of the Azalea Society of America (2003 to 2007). He has been a member of the Louisiana chapter of the ASA since 1983, serving as president of the chapter from 1990-1992. A true promoter of the azalea, he coordinated two national conventions for the ASA, one in New Orleans (1991) and the other in Charleston, South Carolina (2000). From 1973 through 1986, he owned and operated Savannah Spring Nursery, a wholesale plant nursery specializing in container-grown azaleas. During this period he developed the multi-season-blooming Encore® Azaleas now marketed through Plant Development Services (PDSI) in Loxley, Alabama. The Louisiana Nursery and Landscape Association recognized his significant contribution to the industry by awarding him a Professional Achievement Award, presented during the Gulf States Horticultural Expo in Mobile, Alabama, in 2000. He is presently active in the development and testing of new azalea varieties through Transcend Nursery in Independence, Louisiana. He is also a tireless promoter of the Society, speaking at many nursery and garden shows, from which he has gained the Society an impressive list of new members.

Len Miller, "Symbolism in the Japanese Garden." Drawing on his travel and gardening experiences, Len will show how important Japanese maples and Japanese garden design have been as complements to azaleas in our gardens. In particular, he will emphasize how Japanese garden design uses the shapes of plants and topographic features in a symbolic way to create desired effects.

The Stephen F. Austin State University

Mast Arboretum

The SFA Mast Arboretum is a project of the Horticulture program within the Agriculture Department of the Arthur Temple College of Forestry and Agriculture. Our mission is four-fold:

1. Promote the conservation, selection, and use of native Texas plants
2. Acquire, evaluate, and promote new and adapted landscape plant materials, thus encouraging plant diversity in the landscape
3. Act as a living laboratory for SFA students and faculty as well as the nursery and landscape industries
4. Act as an aesthetic and educational environment for students, visitors, and local citizens

The Arboretum began as a project of one of Dr. David L. Creech's plant materials courses in 1985. He realized that ornamental horticulture was going to be an area of great growth in the coming years, and he had his students plant an evaluation set of junipers just south of the Agriculture Building on campus. Under his enthusiastic leadership, that tiny area—the size of a small residential backyard—has grown to 58 acres on the campus of SFA, with a 118-acre conservation easement for native plant research just west of Nacogdoches. The four gardens on campus all exhibit species diversity:

- **Arboretum**—11 acres filled with over 10,000 taxa and 15 theme gardens. We have received donated material from nurserymen across the South as well as a wonderful collection of Kurume and other evergreen azaleas from the US National Arboretum. Our collections run the gamut of Texas-adapted plant material, much of it new introductions from Southeast Asia, China, and Japan.
- **Ruby M. Mize Azalea Garden**—eight acres of over 8,500 plants, primarily azaleas (both evergreen and deciduous, 525 named cultivars from 52 hybrid groups, including species), but also including large collections (of over 200 cultivars each) of Japanese maples, *Camellia (sasanqua and japonica)*, *Hydrangea*, and *Cephalotaxus*. Major construction began in 1998 and was essentially complete in 2002, but we continue to add features and plant collections.
- **Jim and Beth Kingham Children's Garden**—a portion of the Arboretum where a 'green classroom' Timber-framers Pavilion and butterfly and hummingbird garden were developed in 1998-1999.
- **SFA Pineywoods Native Plant Center**—a 39-acre natural woodland within the City of Nacogdoches and on the northern side of the SFA campus. While our "Three R's" Endangered Plant Research Program began at the Arboretum in 1996, it was moved to the PNPC location when development of this site began. Dedicated in 2000, this garden also contains the Ladybird Johnson Wildflower Demonstration Garden, one of only three in the US associated with the Ladybird Johnson Wildflower Center in Austin, Texas. Every other year, the PNPC also hosts the Lone Star Regional Native Plant Conference. Each year, our

hands-on environmental education programs ("learning excursions") introduce over 8,000 students (K-12) to conservation and horticulture through fun and memorable lessons.

The Arboretum raises some of its funds in two plant sales a year, with plants propagated onsite by our Research Associate for Plant Evaluation, Dawn Stover, who is assisted by Arboretum volunteers. The grounds are maintained by student assistants. There is an advisory board of volunteers and graduates of the SFA horticulture program. The remaining support comes from grants, donations, and State of Texas funding.

Horticultural Bragging Rights

The SFA Mast Arboretum is the only public garden in Texas to have ever brought an *Amorphophallus titanum* (Giant Corpse Flower) to flower. The four-pound corm came from a nursery in Florida, whose owner entrusted it to Dr. Creech after one of his many talks around the US. Within four years the corm gained 22 pounds and bloomed on July 14, 2004, with a spathe 6' tall. This member of the *Araceae* (Arum) family loves the heat of the summer here, since it mimics the heat and humidity of Southeast Asia and Sumatra, its native home. "Jack," named so he could be an SFA Lumberjack, is shown here with Dawn. (Photo by Dr. David Creech.) For more pictures and the full story of this landmark event, visit: <http://arboretum.sfasu.edu/events/amt/index.htm>



Len is the founder and designer of Lendonwood Botanical Garden located in Grove, Oklahoma. Len is a retired dentist whose first love is horticulture. He built his first public Japanese Garden, the Satsuki Garden, in 1974. However, Lendonwood Gardens is his life work, six acres of gardens on eight acres of land, which began with 1,000 azaleas in 1972. Lendonwood now has 10,000 plants with over 200 species represented and 1,500 cultivars. It was opened to the public in 1995 and attracts 10,000 visitors per year. Dr. Miller was first exposed to the Orient when he spent one year in Vietnam and traveled throughout Asia. A Japanese garden enthusiast, he has used ideas for his gardens from the four trips to Japan. For eight years he sponsored a student exchange with Miyama Cho, a town in the Kyoto prefecture. Len Miller enjoys studying the art of Japanese gardening in

any book about the subject. One Sunset book on Japanese gardens, purchased in 1972 for \$2.75, has been both a blessing and a curse: Through its information many beautiful gardens have been created, but it has been an expensive lesson. Dr. Miller is president of the American Rhododendron Society and founder of the ARS Ozark Chapter. Presently, he is the gardener over nine acres.

Saturday, March 31 Keynote Speaker

Tom Spencer, "Soul of the Garden." Tom is a Texas-based television producer and host, freelance writer, photographer, and radio personality. He has been associated with a KLRU-TV, Austin's Public Television station since 1982. He is also a garden designer with a profound vision. His presentation will touch on how to tap into the soul of a garden, no matter what the size or age of it.

Since 1983 Spencer has also produced and hosted a weekly radio program on gardening for KLBJ-AM. He is the author of numerous articles and columns on gardening and landscape design. His work has appeared in a variety of publications including: *The Good Life*, *Domain Magazine*, *The Austin Chronicle*, and *The Austin American-Statesman*. He also currently hosts the Central Texas Gardener, a weekly gardening program presented by KLRU, and a weekly radio program called The Greenthumb Hour. When time permits, he also consults on garden designs, which are, according to his Web site, "...collaborative experiences to help the owner create a garden that will become a source of inspiration every single day."

Spencer's documentary projects have also included: *Soul of the Garden*, a series of personal spiritual reflections; *Las Misiones: The Missions of Texas*; *Rio Grande: La Frontera*, on the architecture and history of the Texas-Mexico border; and *James Michener and the Art of Collecting*, a profile of writer James Michener and his collection of 20th century American art.

Spencer has won many awards and honors for his work on television. A singular honor came in 1994 when he was appointed to a select task force by the President of PBS to reshape public affairs programming for the national system. More recently, his documentary, *The Painted Churches of Texas: Echoes of the Homeland* won the National Educational Television Association's award for Historical Documentary of the Year (2001). In 2003 the Austin Chronicle named Austin Now as "Austin's Best New Television Program" as a part of its annual "Best of Austin Awards" issue and in 2004 Spencer was chosen as "Best TV Moderator" by the same publication.

An accomplished photographer, his work has appeared in galleries and has been published along with his written work.

For more information, visit his internationally popular Web site: www.soulofthegarden.com