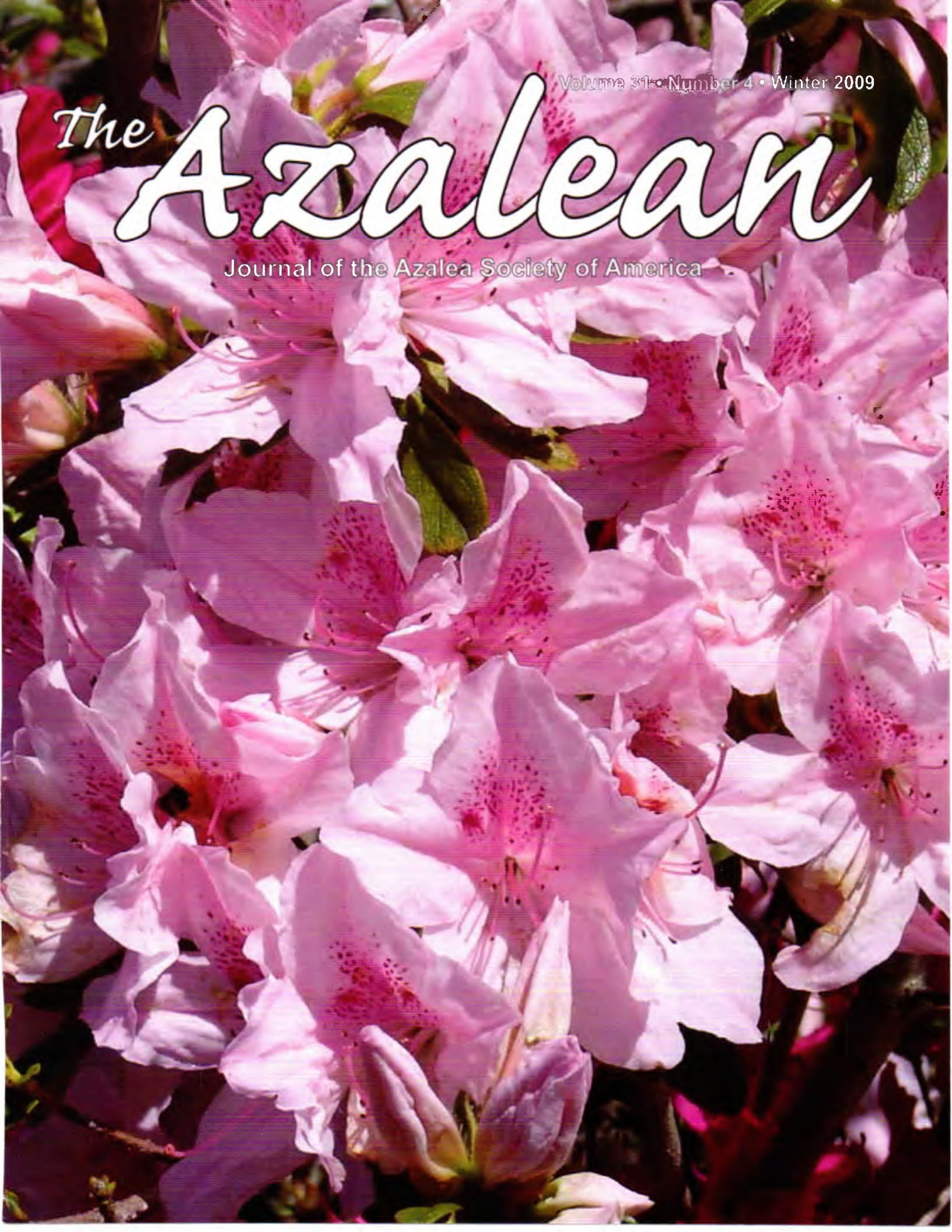


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The

Azalean

Journal of the Azalea Society of America



President's Letter

Aaron Cook — Valdese, North Carolina



What a year! It has been almost nonstop since this time last year. The year started with seed donations and orders flooding in. Almost daily through late November and early December, packages of seed arrived in my mailbox. The seed list was posted on the Web site by **Bob Stelloh** just after Christmas, and the first order arrived from ASA Past President **John Brown** shortly thereafter. During the next couple months, I kept busy filling orders. By April we had far exceeded sales for all previous years.

Just as the seed program began to wind down, I received the packages from ASA Secretary **Carol Flowers** in preparation for the Board meetings at the Annual Convention. The Northern Virginia Chapter put on a great convention with warm hospitality, peak gardens, and interesting speakers. The board meetings at the convention, and online since the convention, have been very productive, resulting in an active Research Foundation chaired by **Jim Thornton**. This is the culmination of many years of hard work, and fulfills a dream of two of our most illustrious members, **Mal Clark** and **Augie Kehr**. What better way is there to honor these past pillars of the Azalea Society?

I am also happy to report that we have conventions scheduled through 2012. In 2010, we will be in New Orleans, Louisiana; in 2011, we will meet in Evansville, Indiana; and in 2012, we'll be back in Asheville, North Carolina for a joint convention with the ARS.

The summer months were busy with members taking part in many azalea projects. There were workdays spent clearing balds of invading trees and shrubs, headed up by **Jim Brant** and his rowdy crew. Chapter activities, convention planning meetings, and plant propagation workdays have kept many ASA members busy and out of trouble. There were trips by various groups to observe native azaleas in the wild, and in between all these activities a little gardening probably took place. Yes, the members of the Azalea Society have been busy this year.

Never a group content to rest on its laurels, the Society is busy preparing for an even better 2010. When I think of our future I am reminded of a former President's letter where the importance of chapter activities was stated. It was said, and I agree, that chapters are where the rubber meets the road. I am blessed to belong to a very active chapter. It is filled with a group of fellow azaleaphiles who are committed to and passionate about the Azalea Society's goals. They are also a generous and compassionate group of friends, and a lot of fun to be around. My wish is that every member of the society could belong to a dynamic and active chapter.

In closing, I will leave you with three challenges and one promise for 2010:

Challenge # 1—If you are a member of a chapter, attend the chapter functions and become more involved. If you do not belong to a chapter, join one or start one in your area.

Challenge # 2—Lay aside *The Azalean* right now and send in your membership renewal to ASA Treasurer **Dan Krabill**, 6009 Copely Lane, Mclean, VA 22101.

Challenge #3—Fill out the registration form for the 2010 Convention in New Orleans and send it in.

With the completion of these three simple tasks, we will be well on our way to the most successful year the ASA has ever had.

The Azalea Society of America, organized December 9, 1977 and incorporated in the District of Columbia, is an educational and scientific non-profit association devoted to the culture, propagation, and appreciation of azaleas which are in the subgenera *Tsutsusi* and *Pentanthera* of the genus *Rhododendron* in the Heath family (*Ericaceae*).

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serve as ex-officio directors.

Chapters

Brookside Gardens (chartered Aug. 1979) William C. Miller III, <i>Pres.</i>	Ben Morrison (chartered May 1980) Harold Belcher, <i>Pres.</i>
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Northern Virginia (chartered May 1980) Eve Harrison, <i>Pres.</i>	Louisiana (chartered June 1981) Dr. Allen Owings, <i>Pres.</i>
--	---

Tri-State (chartered Oct. 1981) Larry Miller, <i>Pres.</i>	Texas (chartered May 1989) Bart Brechter, <i>Pres.</i>
---	---

Oconee (chartered Nov. 1991) Ed Mellon, <i>Pres.</i>	Vaseyi (chartered June 2001) April Sanborn, <i>Pres.</i>
---	---

Lake Michigan (chartered May 2003) Phil Lanning, <i>Pres.</i>	Alabamense (chartered May 2005)
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Southern California
(chartered March 2007)
Jim Jaeger, *Pres.*

Regular membership is open to all interested parties for an annual amount of \$25; life-membership for one or two persons at the same address is \$500. Members receive *The Azalean* and are eligible for participation in all activities of the Society including those of the chapter with which the member affiliates. For information and a membership application, write to Carol Flowers, Secretary, 700 New Hampshire NW, Apt. 1011, Washington, DC 20037 or visit www.azaleas.org.

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Opinions and views expressed in *The Azalean* are those of the contributors or editor, not necessarily those of the Society, and are presented to foster a wider appreciation and knowledge of azaleas. Advertisements are presented as a service to our readers and do not imply endorsement by the Azalea Society of America. Advertising and other contributions to *The Azalean* are used exclusively to help defray the costs of publishing *The Azalean*.

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On the Cover

'Republic West Florida' was named by Robert "Buddy" Lee. It is a seedling from Southern Indica 'Fisher's Pink' and features a large, single light pink flower with darker pink blotch. It was released in the late 1970's. Not registered.

The azalea may be viewed during the 2010 convention tour of the Margie Y. Jenkins Garden.



Photo Robert "Buddy" Lee

Louisiana Lagniappe 2010— A Little Something Extra

Regina Bracy—Hammond, Louisiana

The Louisiana Chapter of the Azalea Society of America invites you to experience Louisiana Lagniappe 2010. Lagniappe is an old Louisiana French custom of giving customers a little extra. And we plan to show you how it works!

The convention dates are Sunday, March 14 through Wednesday, March 17, 2010. We will be staying in New Orleans' historic French Quarter at the Iberville Suites Hotel. This historic Vieux Carré all-suites hotel is located one block off famous Canal and Bourbon Streets. Restaurants, shopping, museums, art, antiques, attractions, jazz, and history are in easy walking distance. A continental breakfast (including hot foods) is complimentary. Very little street parking is available in the French Quarter, so plan to park in the hotel lot at the discounted rate.

The hotel is offering one night prior and two nights after our convention for the same rate. Plan to stay a few days extra to enjoy the sights, sounds, and food of New Orleans!

A little something extra: All tours are guided. Follow along as we walk through each garden with the owner. Hear the stories they have to share about their favorite plants, their history, growth habits, and special features.

Monday Tours

Global Wildlife Center—A brief stop to mingle with more than 4,000 exotic, endangered, and threatened animals from all over the world. Global Wildlife Center is the largest totally free-roaming wildlife preserve of its kind in the country. Camels and bison and giraffes! Oh my!

Transcend Nursery—Robert “Buddy” Lee is a long-time ASA member and has held many leadership positions in the organization including president, vice-president, and convention organizer. Buddy is a recipient of the ASA's Distinguished Service Award in recognition of his contributions to the nursery and landscape industry. He is the developer of Encore® azaleas with 24 cultivars released in trade. Although azaleas are his first love, his breeding efforts have not been limited to azaleas. An avid breeder for more than 30 years, his nursery is packed with interesting and one-of-a-kind plants including some unique azaleas, magnolias, hollies, and loropetalums. Guided tours will be provided by Buddy as he describes how he developed Encore® azaleas and points out a few of his favorite plants. Maybe we will see the next new release!

Bracy's Nursery—Started by Randy and Regina Bracy in 1980, Bracy's Nursery is an 160-acre wholesale container nursery. It is one of the premier nurseries in the South.



▲ Robert 'Buddy' Lee, developer of Encore® azaleas, among his Encores.

▼ The Reflection Garden at the home of Randall and Regina Bracy. Bracy's Nursery can be seen in background.



As we ride through the nursery, tour guides will point out the unique aspects of Bracy's, such as worker housing, propagation houses, a four-and-a-half acre shade structure, and irrigation system that recycles 90 percent of water applied on the nursery. Lunch will be served across the street on the grounds of their home. Their landscaping encompasses



Photo: Regina Lacey

▲ Ms. Margie in the Margie Y. Jenkins Azalea Garden at the LSU AgCenter's Hammond Research Station.

seven acres and includes water features, decking, an outdoor kitchen and cabana, and multiple garden rooms defined by plants, hills, and retaining walls.

Jenkins Farm and Nursery—Margie Y. Jenkins (Ms. Margie) began her nursery career late in life. After taking a course with Dr. Neil Odenwald, LSU Professor Emeritus and book author, Ms. Margie found her thinking about plants to be completely changed.

“When I came back my goal was to grow things that were unusual,” she said. “Of course a lot of the old plants, too, I wanted to grow—and of course, natives.” In 1977 Ms. Margie, at the age of 56, was ready to take on the challenge of opening a nursery to grow different types of plants.

Azalea production in the southeastern United States in the '70s had focused on the Southern Indica, Kurume, and a couple of Glenn Dale varieties. As Ms. Margie was active in national azalea meetings, she knew of the hardier varieties grown as far north as New York. Always a seeker of new and interesting plants, she bought rooted-cuttings of several varieties of Robin Hill azaleas and other hybrid groups and put them in production at her nursery. Now, in any process of discovery, there is a wildcard. For Ms. Margie, it was the cold blast that the area received in the winter of 1983.

Many Southern Indica azaleas suffered tremendous damage during the winter of '83, but the hardiness of these “new” varieties was demonstrated. This cold hardiness, and the off-season blooming habit that Ms. Margie later observed convinced her to propagate and expand these new azaleas.

Names like ‘Arabesk’, ‘Watchet’, ‘Janet Rhea’, and ‘Hardy Gardenia’ that were on a Jenkins Nursery liner receipt in 1981 are now stock-in-trade items of southern nurseries.

When the Azalea Society of America conferred its Distinguished Service Award on Margie Jenkins in 2007, the tribute acknowledged “the increased use of ‘Robin Hill’ azalea cultivars and other azalea hybrid groups in the southeastern United States can be attributed to [Ms. Margie’s] interest in growing and distributing these plants prior to other wholesale producers.”

Today she still watches her crops with the eye for discovery that had her notice a sport of ‘Watchet’. She isolated and propagated this white sport and named it ‘Freddy’ in honor of her son. ‘Freddy’ is on the cover of the *The Azalean* Winter 2006 issue.

A visit to Jenkins Nursery is a visit to a plant collection of unusual and native plants that has been ongoing for more than 30 years. Ms. Margie has many interesting and unusual plants. Each has a story that she is willing to share. Join us for a guided tour through a plant enthusiast’s wonderland.

Hammond Research Station—Monday’s tour will end at Louisiana State University AgCenter’s Hammond Research Station. The Hammond Research Station is the center for landscape horticulture research in Louisiana. Each year the station hosts the largest herbaceous ornamental plant trials in Louisiana and the South. Expect to see more than 500 different cool-season blooming plants during the visit. **Dr. Allen Owings** will be available to answer your questions as you stroll the grounds. You will have plenty of time to view all the gardens as we will have our evening meal and program on the grounds before returning to our hotel. Learn more about the station at www.lsuagcenter.com/hammond.

Margie Y. Jenkins Azalea Garden—Few among us have the national contacts and recognition or the huge circle of friends, family, and admirers that Ms. Margie has. We wanted to do something 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. So in 2006, we threw a Garden Party for Ms. Margie and collected monies for the establishment and maintenance of the Margie Y. Jenkins Azalea Garden.

In September 2006, the first azaleas were planted in the garden. Ms. Margie selected the first group to be planted and, of course, these were her favorite Robin Hill cultivars of which she selected 13. Also included in this first planting were 23 cultivars of Encore® azaleas, a nod to the other plant aficionado and breeder from Southeast Louisiana, **Robert “Buddy” Lee**. Later the Crimson azaleas (‘Crimson Majesty’, ‘Crimson Princess’, and ‘Crimson Queen’) developed by another Louisianan, Richard Odom of Country Pines Nursery, were added to the garden. The size of the garden was doubled in 2007 with the addition of Southern Indica azaleas.

Ms. Margie’s love of unusual and native plants has been

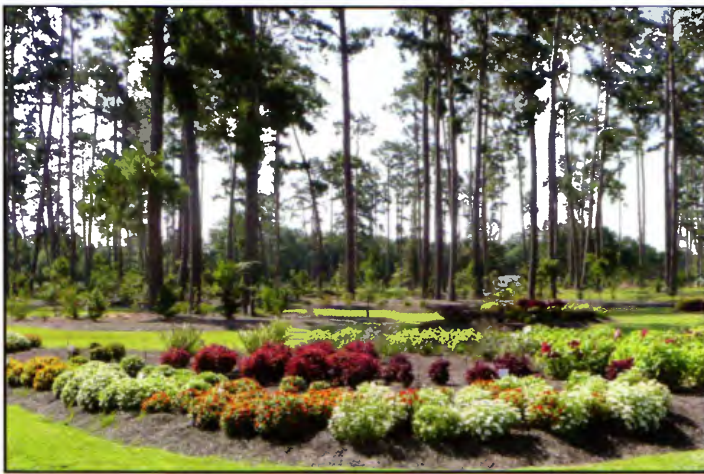


Photo Regina Bracy

▲ Some of the 500 varieties of blooming plants on display at the LSU AgCenter's Hammond Research Station. The Margie Y. Jenkins Azalea Garden is in the background.

▼ Conservatory of Two Sisters at the New Orleans Botanical Garden.



Photo New Orleans Botanical Garden

incorporated in the garden. One can find Japanese maples, wisteria, hibiscus, huckleberry, viburnum, osmanthus, lonicera, abelia, styrax, wisteria, camellia, hosta, itea, illicium, ilex, dianella, leucothoe, aucuba, euonymus, farkleberry, and lorepetalum.

Native trees include *Callicarpa*, *Carpinus*, *Catalpa*, cedar, *Chionanthus* (fringe tree), *Cornus*, *Crataegus* (hawthorn), *Malus*, *Fagus*, *Gordonia*, *Sinojackia* (Jacktree), *Nyssa*, *Beschorneria* (false red agave), *Halesia* (silverbell), *Acer*, *Quercus*, *Lespedeza*, *Myrica*, persimmon, sassafras, *Aleurites* (Tung Oil), *Ulmus*, and *Prunus*. Magnolias in-

clude Japanese, Southern, *Prunus ashei*, *tripetala*, *macrophylla*, and sweetbay. We plan to stroll through the garden with Ms. Margie on a guided tour to learn about her favorite azaleas and native plants.

Tuesday Tours

New Orleans Botanical Garden—Opened in 1936 as New Orleans' first public classical garden, it is one of the few remaining examples of public garden design from the WPA and Art Deco period. It is a showcase of three notable talents: New Orleans architect Richard Koch, landscape architect William Wiedorn, and artist Enrique Alferez. The park is home to the largest collection of mature live oaks in the world, some several hundred years old. The McDonogh (estimated at 600 years old), Dueling, and Suicide Oaks are among the remnants of this ancient forest that started long before Iberville and Bienville first scouted the area for a site to build the city and port that became New Orleans. Devastated by Hurricane Katrina, the garden is making an amazing comeback. Check out the garden at <http://garden.neworleanscitypark.com>.

Dan Gill, the voice of LSU AgCenter's highly successful *Get It Growing* media program, has worked and lived in New Orleans for more than 20 years. Dan will provide a guided tour through the garden, identifying plants and explaining how plants grow in the hot, humid subtropical city of New Orleans. More than 2,000 varieties of plants reside in the garden, including the largest palm collection in Louisiana as well as the Living Fossil and Tropical Rainforest exhibits.

Besthoff Sculpture Garden—Located to the rear of the New Orleans Museum of Art and adjacent to the New Orleans Botanical Garden, is the 5-acre Besthoff Sculpture Garden, featuring 60 sculptures by major 20th Century European, American, Israeli, and Japanese artists. The sculptures, valued in excess of \$25 million, are on view amongst meandering foot-paths and pedestrian bridges, reflecting lagoons, Spanish moss-laden 200-year-old live oaks, mature pines, magnolias, and camellias.

Among the artists represented are Antoine Bourdelle, Gaston Lachaise, Henry Moore, Jacques Lipchitz, Barbara Hepworth, Seymour Lipton, Arnaldo Pomodoro, Kenneth Snelson, George Rickey, Elizabeth Frink, Masayuki Nagare, Siah Armajani, Lynn Chadwick, Louise Bourgeois, Tony Smith, George Segal, Deborah Butterfield and Joel Shapiro. More information can be found at <http://www.noma.org/sgarden>. Although this is a self-guided tour, an audio tour that highlights 20 of the sculptures in the garden is accessible and free of charge through visitors' cell phones.

Longue Vue—The eight-acre garden is an idyllic and tranquil oasis in the lively pulse that is urban New Orleans. Created in 1934 by Ellen Biddle Shipman, known as "the dean of American women landscape architects," Longue Vue has an important place in the history of garden design in

this country.

At the time of Longue Vue's creation, a bold new garden movement was in effect. The Country Place Era, as it is termed by scholars of landscape history, was a period during which a unique set of conditions combined to create some of the most breathtaking garden estates in America. In 2006, Longue Vue was designated a Preservation Project of the Garden Conservancy. A docent will provide a guided tour through the nine garden "rooms" of Longue Vue. More information can be obtained at <http://www.longuevue.com>.

Sunday Speakers

Dr. Allen Owings is a horticulture professor with the LSU AgCenter located at the Hammond Research Station, Hammond, Louisiana. He has been a faculty member at the LSU AgCenter since 1992 and is the statewide coordinator for extension programs for the nursery and landscape industries. In addition, he conducts ornamental plant landscape performance evaluations at the LSU AgCenter—this includes azaleas, crape myrtles, roses, annual bedding plants, and herbaceous perennials. He serves as president of the Baton Rouge Rose Society, director of research and education for the Louisiana Nursery and Landscape Association, and president of the Louisiana Chapter of the Azalea Society of America. He writes weekly newspaper articles for the LSU AgCenter and *Hammond Daily Star*. He is a monthly contributor to *Louisiana Gardener Magazine*.

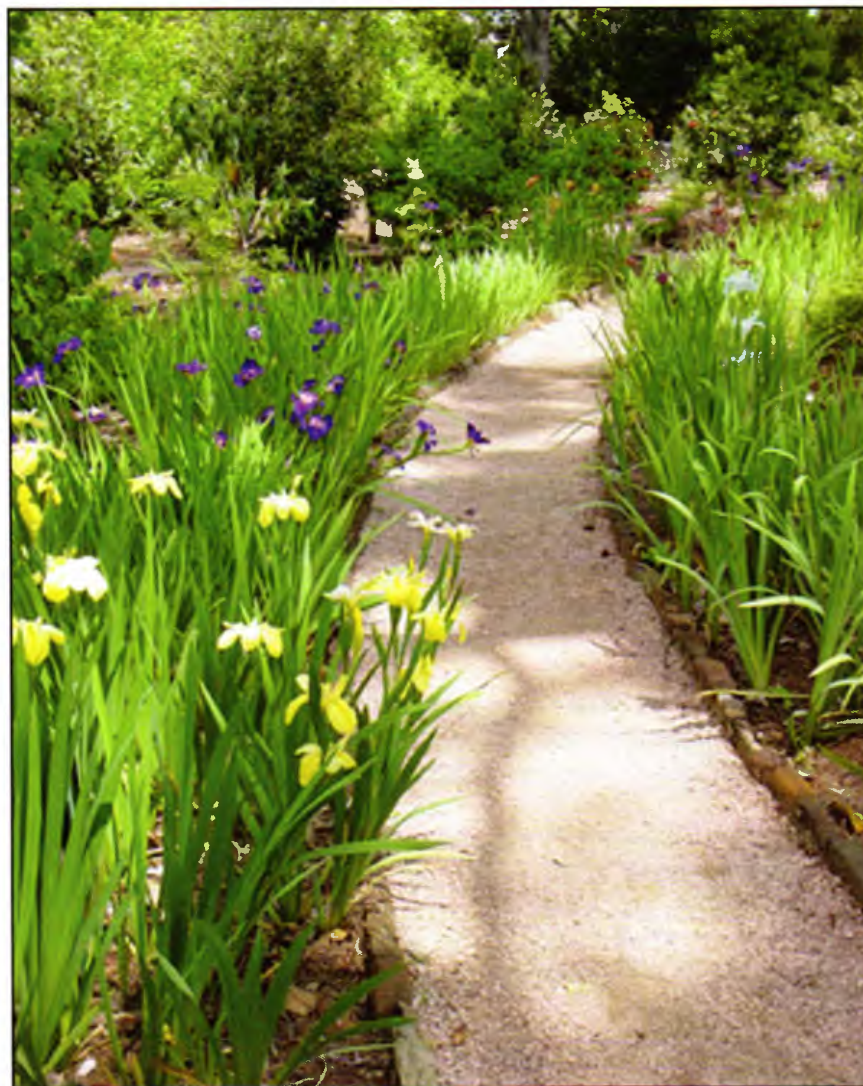
Although Louisiana hybridizers are relatively young in the history of azaleas and may not be as well-known to the industry, they have made significant contributions to the azalea world especially in the South. Dr. Owings will examine these contributions and highlight some of Louisiana's own in "Louisiana's Contribution to Azaleas."

Paul Soniat is the founding director of the New Orleans Botanical Garden and Celebration in the Oaks in City Park. He oversees volunteer and educational programs, strengthening plant collections, managing finance and fund raising efforts, and developing a master plan for the garden. For the past 23 years, he has been directing the efforts to turn an old forgotten garden into one of the country's premier botanical gardens. Following the devastating destruction from



▲ Oak Alley at Longue Vue Gardens.

▼ Garden path at Longue Vue Gardens.



Hurricane Katrina in August 2005, Paul, along with a team of dedicated volunteers and generous donors, began a painstaking restoration of the New Orleans Botanical Gardens. In just six months, the garden reopened to the public, becoming an encouraging symbol of hope for a city in recovery. Paul will share the story of the destruction and rebuilding of a botanical garden entitled "How to Recover a Garden after a Hurricane."

Robert “Buddy” Lee is well-known in the ASA, having served in a multitude of positions. He has been awarded the Distinguished Service Award, the ASA’s highest award, for his contribution to azaleas and the industry. Buddy loves azaleas and has spent his life working and hybridizing them. He is the breeder of the successful line of Encore® azaleas. He has also dabbled in hollies, white-flowered loropetalums, and dwarf gardenias, and has developed the gardenia ‘Jubilation’ and loropetalum ‘Emerald Snow’. Buddy, the owner of Transcend Nursery, will take us on a “Walk Down Azalea Lane.”

Monday Speakers

Dan Gill holds the Consumer Horticulture state-wide position with the LSU AgCenter in Baton Rouge. Dan is the spokesperson for the LSU AgCenter’s Get It Growing proj-

ect, a statewide educational effort in home horticulture utilizing radio, internet, television, and newsprint. Gardeners throughout Louisiana read his columns in local newspapers, watch his gardening segments on local television stations, and listen to him on local radio. In the New Orleans area, Dan appears weekly on the morning news, writes a weekly gardening column, and hosts the Saturday morning “Garden Show,” a live call-in radio program. Dan is co-author of the *Louisiana Gardener’s Guide*, author of *Month-by-Month Gardening in Louisiana* and co-author of *Month-by-Month Gardening in Texas*. His “South Louisiana Region Report” and “Only in Louisiana” columns appear monthly in the Louisiana Gardener Magazine. Dan Gill’s talk is titled “Gardening in South Louisiana—What Makes it Unique.”

Dr. Steve Krebs is Director of The Holden Arboretum’s David G. Leach Research Station. Dr. David Leach was an eminent American horticulturist and is reknowned for his development and introduction of hardy (Zone 5) hybrid rhododendrons and azaleas. The continuation of his projects at The Holden Arboretum still emphasizes freezing adaptations, but also includes new objectives such as disease resistance and heat tolerance.

The Station’s azalea breeding is aimed at producing summer blooming, fragrant hybrids with strong colors, and is based entirely on native deciduous species, including *Rhododendron austrinum*, a Southern species that has proven to be quite hardy in Northern Ohio. In his experience, native azalea species are also resistant to powdery mildew disease. Breeding of evergreen rhododendrons (elepidotes) at Holden is almost entirely focused on the use of *R. hyperythrum*, a species from Taiwan that is root rot resistant and heat tolerant. They are crossing it into a broad array of cold hardy cultivars and selecting candidate hybrids for further evaluation in climates ranging from USDA Zones 5 to 8. Dr. Krebs shares highlights of his work in his presentation “North Meets South: Breeding Rhododendrons and Azaleas with Broad Temperature Adaptations.”

Dr. David Himelrick is a horticulture professor at LSU AgCenter and an entertainer. What our brain “sees” is influenced by our past experiences, imagination, and associations. Dr. Himelrick explores the fascinating aspects of our minds in “Illusions of the Mind.” He will keep you guessing as he uses the power of imagination to draw an image that exists only in someone’s mind!

Post Convention Tour

Buddy Lee is making arrangements for a post-convention tour of **Jim Campbell’s** River Camellias Nursery as well as **John Thornton’s** nursery to view his breeding work on rhododendrons. If you are interested in attending the post-convention tour, please contact Buddy directly by e-mail at buddyazaleas@yahoo.com. There is no charge for the tour, but you must provide your own transportation.

Hotel Reservations

Iberville Suites, located in New Orleans’s historic French Quarter one block off famous Canal and Bourbon Streets, is the convention hotel.

Please make reservations directly with the hotel either online at www.ibervillesuites.com or through central reservations at 1-866-229-4351. Request the **Azalea Society 2010 Conference** rate (Group Code: AOY) of \$99 a night, double occupancy. Make your hotel reservations by **February 12, 2010** to qualify for the special convention rate.

The convention room rate is valid one night prior and two nights after the convention. Plan to stay a few days extra to enjoy the sights and sounds and food of New Orleans!

This is a suites only hotel. The majority of rooms have one king/queen in bedroom and sofa sleeper in living room. A continental breakfast is complimentary with room.

There is very little street parking in the French Quarter. Parking is available in the hotel lot for the discounted rate of \$20/night (usual charge is \$32).

Iberville Suites

910 Iberville Street
New Orleans, LA 70112
Phone: (504) 523-2400
www.ibervillesuites.com

Air Travel & Transportation

New Orleans International Airport (MSY) is serviced by most major airlines. Airport shuttle is provided by Airport Shuttle New Orleans. Cost is \$15 per person one way. Taxis are available and price is comparable if 2 or more people share a cab.

Optional New Orleans Attractions

The Secret Gardens Tour®—The annual event opens to the public many of the most spectacular private gardens in Uptown New Orleans. During the tours, volunteer docents direct visitors through the gardens, while renowned landscaping experts and homeowners are on hand to answer questions and offer insider details. Aside from the gardens, there are musical performances throughout and Secret Treasures, an outdoor boutique offering garden accessories, gifts and art by local artists and merchants.

This year the Secret Gardens Tour® coincides with the ASA convention. Although this is not an official part of the ASA convention, it is a wonderful opportunity to see hidden gardens and a great way to spend a day in New Orleans. The self-guided walking tour takes place on Saturday, March 13, and includes 12 private gardens. The tour occurs on upscale St. Charles Avenue near historic Audubon Park (a short taxi or streetcar ride from the French Quarter). For more information or to purchase tickets (\$25 per person), go to <http://www.secretgardentour.org>.

National World War II Museum—The museum tells the story of the American experience in the war that changed the world—why it was fought, how it was won, and what it means today—so that all generations will understand the price of freedom and be inspired by what they learn. Dedicated in 2000 as The National D-Day Museum and now designated by Congress as the country's official museum of the Second World War, it celebrates the American spirit, the teamwork, optimism, courage and sacrifice of the men and women who fought on the battle front and the home front.

A \$300 million expansion that includes a six-acre campus of exhibition pavilions, the 4-D Victory Theater, Stage Door Canteen and a research and conference center is scheduled to open at the end of 2009, just in time for the ASA Convention. This museum is fantastic and within walking distance or short taxi ride (10 blocks) of the French Quarter. For more information, call 877-813-3329 or visit www.nationalww2museum.org.

Audubon Nature Institute—A family of museums and parks, including three award-winning facilities: Audubon Zoo, Aquarium of the Americas, and Insectarium. For information, call 1-800-774-7394 or check out Web site <http://www.auduboninstitute.org>.

One of the country's top-ranked zoos, Audubon Zoo offers an exotic mix of animals from around the globe, engaging natural habitats, lush gardens and resting spots, the mystical Louisiana swamp and "hands-on" animal encounters. With innovative natural habitat exhibits and an animal collection ranging from the unique white alligators to the extraordinary white tigers, Audubon Zoo has become one of the Gulf South's favorite family gathering spots.

Walk beneath the vivid Caribbean Reef, marvel at the lush beauty of the Amazon Rainforest and journey the Mississippi River at Audubon Aquarium of the Americas where

penguins, sting rays, sharks, and other deep sea creatures await your visit.

Insectarium showcases the largest group of animals on the planet, insects. Your visit to the one-of-a-kind, interactive, and award-winning Audubon Insectarium will illuminate amazing things about these tiny (and not so tiny!) creatures. Located in the historic U.S. Custom House on Canal Street (three blocks from the Iberville Suites Hotel), Audubon Insectarium will delight you with "up close and personal" live insect encounters, the indelible story of the Crescent City and insects, and "Life Underground," where you'll be shrunk to insect size. Discover global insect customs, sample exotic insect cuisine, learn about the history of termites and the latest technologies used in pest control management. Take in a fun animated insect film at the immersion theater, traipse through the Louisiana swamp, enjoy the tranquility of the Japanese butterfly garden and watch hundreds of winged beauties as they flit about.

St. Charles Streetcar—A must do in New Orleans is to hop on the St. Charles Streetcar, the longest continually operating streetcar line in the United States. Remember, it's a streetcar, not a trolley. This moving National Historic Landmark starts its run at Canal Street (three blocks from Iberville Suites Hotel), clanging through the Garden District (see below), passing Tulane and Loyola Universities (and very green Audubon Park across the street, not to mention the nearby mansions with wraparound porches) and winding up at Palmer Park in Carrollton. This 13-mile, 90-minute roundtrip jaunt can be had 24 hours a day.

What happens when the streetcar reaches the end of the line? Well, the driver flips the wood bench seats in the opposite direction, heads to the other end of the car (there are controls at both ends) and goes back into town. The St. Charles Streetcar is \$1.25 each way. It's the best buck you'll spend, even if you have nowhere to go.

Garden District—This part of town bears little resemblance to the French Quarter, and there's a darn good reason for it: no French. Americans started arriving in New Orleans after the 1803 Louisiana Purchase, a bargain at \$15 million thanks to President Thomas Jefferson. These (mostly) Yankees rubbed the Creoles the wrong way, so they set up their own encampment, which they dubbed the city of Lafayette, upriver. It was annexed to New Orleans in 1852, and today we know it as the Garden District, a National Historic Landmark.

Most of the families planted large, lush gardens next to their homes to help counteract the foul odors emanating from the stockyards near the river. The gardens are resplendent in magnolias, palms, and live oak trees. The houses aren't shabby, either, a confection of wrought iron, graceful balconies, and Doric, Ionic, and Corinthian columns as architects imported from Baltimore and Philadelphia engaged in a bigger-is-better rivalry with the Creoles of the French Quarter.

Edgar Degas' uncle lived here, despite being French, more than 100 ago, and yes, the painter did visit. Anne Rice maintains two homes here today (clue to house No. 1: it has a wooden sculpture of a dog on the balcony). Take a tour of the neighborhood (the National Park Service offers an excellent free tour daily) and revel in its magnificence.

Music—In New Orleans, music is everywhere—on the streets, in nightclubs, restaurants, and hotels. Call ahead for showtimes and cover charges.

A must-stop is Preservation Hall in the French Quarter, a showcase for traditional jazz which is low on style points and high on musicianship. No food and drink are served, so bring your own, and bear in mind, you'll probably stand (seats are few).

Tipitina's is a red-hot dance hall which features top local bands and is a regular stop for the Neville Brothers, solo or *en famille*. It's bound to be packed, which is half the fun. If you visit on a Sunday evening, get ready for the *fais-do-do*, a Cajun party featuring finger lickin' red beans and rice and pre-recorded tunes for dancing.

Decidedly different is Rock-n-Bowl at Mid-City Lanes (taxi ride). You got it, music and dancing among the tenpins. Local heroes Boozoo Chavis and the Iguanas play here regularly, and this is without a doubt one of the most rockin' good times you'll have in town.

Mardi Gras World—Blaine Kern Studios has been New Orleans' first family of float builders since 1947. The company is so closely identified with Carnival tradition that Blaine Kern himself is widely known as "Mr. Mardi Gras."

The guided tour takes about one hour and includes a 12 minute movie presentation, an opportunity to try on costumes, King Cake (a Mardi Gras tradition) and coffee (strong), and Mardi Gras beads. The tour finishes with a walk through the Prop Shop to see the artists creating, painting, constructing, and sculpting props for next year's parade. The group will also view the most awesome floats ever built for carnival—the Orpheus 140 foot, triple-tandem sea monster "Leviathan" and the 240 foot quintuple-tandem "Captain Eddie's S.S. Endymion" with tens of thousands of fiber optic lights.

Official New Orleans Web Site—There is much more to see and do in New Orleans. Check out <http://www.neworleansonline.com> for more information.

Dr. Regina Bracy, Resident Coordinator of LSU AgCenter and Professor of Horticulture, earned her bachelor's degree from Southern Louisiana University and her MS and PhD degrees in horticulture at Louisiana State University. Her major areas of interest are production techniques and practices for commercial vegetables, but she has extended this interest into azalea and camellia gardening through her work at the LSU AgCenter at Hammond, Louisiana.

Schedule of Events

Sunday, March 14

Registration Open	1:00 – 7:00 p.m.
ASA Board Meeting	2:00 – 4:30 p.m.
Dinner on Your Own	
Reception/Cash Bar/Plant Sale	6:00 – 7:00 p.m.
Welcome and Speakers	6:00 – 9:30 p.m.
Dr. Allen Owings	
Paul Soniat	
Robert "Buddy" Lee	

Monday, March 15

Registration Open	7:00 a.m.– 8:00 a.m.
Breakfast (complimentary in hotel)	
Tour Departs	8:00 a.m.
Global Wildlife	
Jenkins Nursery	
Transcend Nursery	
Bracy's Nursery & Home (lunch)	
Hammond Research Station	
Reception/Dinner/Plant Sale	
Speakers	
Dan Gill	
Dr. Steve Krebs	
Return to Hotel	10:00 p.m.

Tuesday, March 16

Breakfast (complimentary in hotel)	
Tour Departs	7:45 a.m.
Longue Vue Gardens	
New Orleans Botanical Garden (lunch)	
Besthoff Sculpture Garden	
Return to Hotel	3:30 p.m.
Reception/Cash Bar/Plant Sale	6:30 – 7:30 p.m.
Banquet	7:30 – 10:30 p.m.
Business Meeting	
Awards	
Speaker – Dr. David Himelrick	

Wednesday, March 17

Board Meeting	7:00 – 9:00 a.m.
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Host Hotel

Iberville Suites
910 Iberville Street
New Orleans, LA 70112
Phone: (504) 523-2400
www.ibervillesuites.com

Chapter News

Brookside Gardens

William C. Miller III, President

The chapter auction was held at Brookside Gardens on Sunday, September 20. A popular annual event, the weather cooperated, the turnout was good, the selection on the block was outstanding, and the bidding was spirited. A good time was had by all.

The speaker at the October 11 chapter meeting was **Bill Johnson**, a past chapter president. A horticulturist at the Hillwood Estate, Museum, and Gardens, Bill's PowerPoint presentation, entitled *Hillwood Through the Seasons*, was a seasonal walk through Hillwood's magnificent gardens located in northwest Washington, DC. It was noted that from a design standpoint, a fundamental effort has been made to keep and maintain the gardens as Marjorie Merriweather Post left them. On those rare occasions when a plant expires, an effort is made to replace it either with the same plant or a plant consistent with that period. The gardens are filled with marvelously mature (many more than 100 years old) specimens of plants that are increasingly difficult to find in the trade.

At the October meeting, there were two door prizes. The first was a beautiful specimen of 'Oh My' provided by **Janet Miller** which was won by **Mary Rutley**. 'Oh My' was one of five Satsuki hybrids imported from Japan by USDA pathologist R. Kent Beattie in 1928. It was actually named by the late George Harding who confessed that he named it that because every time he showed it to a woman—that's what she said. For more information about 'Oh My', see the article 'Oh My' Is Very Pretty, But 'My-O' Is Irresistible', *The Azalean*, Vol. 22, No. 1, March 2000, pp.5-7. A picture of 'Oh My' is available on The Azalea Works Web site at www.theazaleaworks.com, and—collectors take note—the plant is available from White's Nursery in Germantown, Maryland. The second door prize, a Johnson's Florist and Garden Center gift certificate, went to **Bea Newkirk**. Attending chapter meetings is more than just educational and social—it has extra benefits.

There was one item of business at the October meeting. The chair entertained a motion that the chapter provide a grant of \$500 to Brookside Gardens in support of the 2010 Green Matters Symposium. **Betty Bieberly** so moved and the motion was seconded by **Flo Ann Bowen**. After a brief discussion, the motion passed unanimously. The chapter's support of this Brookside Gardens program is something of a tradition, and **Mary Rutley** was asked to arrange for a Brookside representative to appear at the chapter's December 6 meeting to receive the check.

At the December chapter meeting, **Jane Kinzie**, President of Kinzie Farms, will present a program entitled "Azaleas—A Local Grower's Perspective." In addition, there will be a number of items of business. We will have the presenta-

tion of the 2009 F. P. Lee Commendation and the election of officers for 2010. **Dr. Judy Karpen** will present a slate of officers for the membership's consideration and nominations from the floor will be accepted.

Northern Virginia

Eve Harrison, President

The chapter met in July for its annual cutting exchange with hundreds of cuttings to choose from. This is such a great way for people to grow azaleas literally free, so it's a great opportunity to invite members of other gardening clubs and societies to visit and see one of the benefits of being a member of ASA. Additionally, the refreshment table just groaned under the benefits of folks contributing a dollar or so to the "jar" for the hospitality chairman to provide more varied dishes.

Plans were made at the November meeting for a party on December 6 at which elections will be held. We'll also have a general celebration of the season and toast the success of our recent convention. January promises to entail much discussion about donations from our profits, plans for new field trips, membership drives and a plant exchange for spring. Several members also met at a regional Japanese maple nursery November 6 where they purchased amazing trees at very low prices—another occasion to invite visitors!

Oconee

Ruth Mellon, Secretary

The chapter met October 18 to hear an interesting and entertaining presentation by **Jody Karlin** of Just Add Water nursery in Conyers, Georgia. Jody brought several specimen plants from his collection of rare and unusual conifers and Japanese maples. These were plants he has collected during the years from all across the United States and other countries. During his presentation, Jody gave us some "hands-on" advice on how to prune and care for these types of plants. We were invited to an open house event the following weekend. However, we plan to visit his nursery and garden in the spring.

Because we were so taken with Jody's talk, we ran over time and had little time to discuss other chapter business such as the 2013 convention. President **Ed Mellon** brought a proposal package from the folks in Coweta County (Newnan). We will continue collecting such proposals in preparation for making our final selection. If you have any ideas along these lines please let us know.

We again had a successful day at the annual Rockdale County Master Gardeners Fall Festival on October 3. A very big thank you to **Sheri Pike** of the Riverside Azalea Farm for plants and to **John Callaway**, **Jim Thornton**, **Don** and **Barbara Bloodworth** for manning the booth.

Our next chapter meeting is scheduled for January 17.

President's Letter

Continued from Page 74.

Oh the promise! I promise to support any chapter or group of people who desires to become a chapter in any way possible. We have people in the Society with the necessary expertise to help with plants, flower shows, speakers, programs, bylaws, and organizational structure.

On the lighter side, here is a test to determine if you are a diehard azaleophile. Give yourself a point for each question you answer correctly. If you score between 10 and 12 you are one of us. Welcome to the family. If you scored a perfect 25 please seek professional help.

- Do you know the Latin names for all of the native azalea species in North America and can you recognize them as you cruise down the highway at 65 mph?
- Have you read Fred Galle's book, *Azaleas*, and can you quote pertinent passages for the benefit of other azaleophiles?
- Are you a frequent contributor on the azalea Yahoo™ group?
- Have you ever made detailed genetic pedigree charts on the blank wall of your garage before making azalea crosses?
- Is at least one shelf of your fridge reserved for azalea seeds and pollen? Or do you have a separate fridge out in the garage for this purpose?
- Is at least one corner of your property covered by azaleas and companion plants in pots?
- Do you have a grow light for starting seeds in more than one room of your house? Or have you moved a car out of the garage to make room for a bank of grow lights?
- Have you ever gardened by flashlight or given non-bloom season label or foliage tours of your garden?
- Can you recall the names and descriptions of every azalea seedling you have ever grown, but sometimes forget the names of your children and their birthdays, or your wedding anniversary?
- Do you have a triple redundancy garden labeling system with GPS positioning and computer mapping?
- Have you ever bid against yourself in an azalea auction—more than once for the same plant?
- Do you talk to your azaleas (or vice versa) as you count and record the number of open blooms each day?
- Do you grow azalea seedlings in rows and call it landscaping?

- Have you ever gotten in line at 6:30 a.m. to get a good seat on a garden tour bus or volunteered to be the chase car for the tour bus?
- Do you have an azalea vanity license plate or azalea unique email address?
- Do you watch HGTV to the exclusion of all other TV channels?
- When *The Azalean* and your Marvel Comic book arrive on the same day, do you read *The Azalean* from cover to cover and then the comic book?
- Have you ever written different names on the front and back of an azalea label and then forgotten which is correct?
- Are your garden labels worth more than the plants they identify?
- Have you ever gotten up at 5 a.m. to drive to Asheville to meet another Society member for an eight-hour round trip drive to Tennessee to rescue plants from a Society member's garden?
- Is there a tree on your property that is missing bark due to root bound azaleas being repeatedly smashed into it?
- Have you ever sat in the parking lot of Ms. Margie's nursery and contemplated mailing your luggage back home to make room for more plants in the car?
- Do you routinely fly to much shorter destinations, but drive from North Carolina to Texas and Michigan so you can bring home more plants?
- Does your vocabulary include any of the following words: polyploidy, 2n, 4n, colchicine, oryzalin, or trifluralin?
- Do you have plants all over your property that bring a smile to your face when you think of the friends who gave them to you?

President's Letter Correction

In the Fall issue of *The Azalean*, I wrote about the organizing meeting of the Brookside Gardens Chapter held on December 9, 1977. I erroneously omitted two names of charter members attending the meeting: **Warren** and **Judy Groomes**. I apologize for the omission and inaccuracy of the information. Much of the information was given to me by other members, but I should have spent more time collecting information and following up. We are so fortunate to have some of our founding members still available to us.

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VOTE FOR 2009 BEST ARTICLE

Vote for one article from 2009 for "Best Azalean Article" using the ballot on the wrapper of *The Azalean*. Ballots must be received by March 1, 2010. The award will be presented at the national convention, March 14 - 17, 2010, in New Orleans, Louisiana.

Society News

Nominating Committee Report

The Nominating Committee presents the following candidates for the 2010-12 ASA Board. Please vote using the official ballot found on the wrapper of this issue. Ballots must be received by March 1, 2010.

Candidate for Secretary

Carol Flowers' interest in azaleas began 30 years ago when all the large trees surrounding her house died. When building the house, contractors had filled in around the trees, suffocating the roots.

After having all the dead trees removed, she and her husband decided to create their own mini-arboretum. She called the U.S. National Arboretum in Washington, D.C., for information. Staff at the National Arboretum referred them to the American Rhododendron Society through which they learned about propagating and caring for rhododendrons.

Eventually, she and her husband joined the ASA and have been active in the Ben Morrison Chapter for many years. Carol has served as both chapter treasurer and secretary at various times, and is our current national secretary.

Candidates for Director

Vincent Ciolino is a long time member of the Louisiana Chapter of the ASA and has served as chapter president. He frequently attends ASA national conventions and is active in numerous horticultural societies.

Jim Campbell has been a member of the ASA and an active member of the Louisiana Chapter since the 1980s. He owns and operates a nursery in Covington, Louisiana, specializing in azaleas and camellias. Jim is retired from the architectural design industry and is an accomplished artist.

J. Jackson and his wife, Lindy, operate a small container nursery, The Tennessee Rose Native Azalea Nursery, in the Blue Ridge of East Tennessee. In the beginning everything was grown in the ground, but pressure from deer browsing forced a change to container production.

The nursery specializes in growing native and hybrid deciduous azaleas. For several years, plants were grown from micropropagated (tissue culture) liners. During the last few years, however, the Jacksons made a deliberate move to growing deciduous and evergreen forms of the rhododendron species from seed.

The decision to cultivate from seed was motivated by preservation. Many rhododendron species have become endangered from the practice of collecting wild plants. The Jacksons seek out specimens in the wild (and in collections) that have superior characteristics of growth, foliage and bloom, and propagate open pollinated seeds from the plants.

The Jacksons believe one of the most enjoyable aspects of the process is exploring for and finding beautiful specimens "in bloom" or "in seed" in the wild. Digital photography is used to document the bloom and growth habit of the plants.

GPS coordinates are used to map the plant location which allows the plant to be easily relocated without having to mark or tag the specimen in any way.

Supporting the Azalea Research Foundation

First envisioned and promoted by **Dr. August E "Augie" Kehr** in 2001, the ASA Board of Directors established the Azalea Research Foundation in the spring of 2009. Augie was a renowned plant scientist and one of our more distinguished members. He had already encouraged and guided the Magnolia Society and the American Rhododendron Society into establishing similar research foundations, and he felt strongly that the ASA should also have a research foundation. Unfortunately, Augie died before that dream was realized.

The purpose of the Azalea Research Foundation is to foster increased knowledge about azaleas. It will do this by funding research into azalea classification, hybridizing, culture, and education. To do this we need money, primarily from you, and also from larger foundations organized to help this type of horticultural research. This article summarizes our early experience with the foundation, to give you ideas on how you can help in this important activity.

Although the Azalea Research Foundation was not authorized until the spring of 2009, the concept was publicized in *The Azalean* beginning in 2002. As a result of your generosity, the foundation had accumulated \$19,862 even before it became official. It is interesting to see why those unofficial funds were donated.

The largest single donation made to the foundation was \$10,000 in 2005, from the estate of **Malcolm "Mal" Clark**. He had decided to make the gift a number of years earlier, in an amount dependent on the sale of some of his property in Southern Pines, North Carolina. Including the Azalea Research Foundation in your will is an excellent way to make significant contributions to the foundation.

You can also make major donations to the foundation at any time, and you can make them in ways that guarantee you ongoing income through an annuity, or by donating appreciated items such as stocks or property to create tax savings to you that are more than the value of the gift. Your tax advisor is in the best position to explore those ideas for you.

The Oconee Chapter donated \$1,000 of proceeds from

Call for Articles

The Azalean needs articles about azaleas, their care, and their use in the landscape. Articles should be submitted as Microsoft Word documents. Illustrations are highly encouraged.

Submit articles to: Pam Fitch, Editor, *The Azalean*, P.O. Box 632537, Nacogdoches, TX 75963 or e-mail theazalean@gmail.com.

the 2003 ASA national convention in Atlanta, and the Vaseyi Chapter donated \$3,000 from the 2008 convention in Asheville, North Carolina. They set an excellent precedent. Such gifts are completely voluntary on the part of our chapters. Be sure to raise and support the idea of earmarking a part of your proceeds when your chapter hosts a convention—or to donate any other excess chapter funds to the foundation. Money sitting in a chapter treasury does little good, while it can do a lot of good in the Azalea Research Foundation.

Making a donation in honor of a loved one or friend who has died is a time-honored tradition, and helps to keep them alive in your memory and the memory of others. Twenty-one memorial gifts were made starting in 2003, first in honor of **Augie Kehr**, and then in honor of **Dick Brooks, Ian Donovan, Bob Barry, and Denise Stelloh**, for a total amount of \$3,450. The average amount was \$164, and the median (as many gifts were bigger as were smaller) amount was \$50. This is an excellent way for every member to participate in the foundation in a modest yet meaningful way.

When **Bob Stelloh** was treasurer, no interest payments were made to the Foundation based on its value. Instead, the money had been commingled with other ASA funds and earned interest for the ASA. When **Dan Krabill** became treasurer, he more correctly began making annual interest payments to the foundation based on its year-end value, although it was not yet officially sanctioned by the Board of Directors. Interest payments were made for 2007 and 2008 totaling \$1,502.

Eventually, as the foundation grows, we plan to make research grants only from the interest earned. Until the foundation grows enough to make that possible, the committee will fund some grants from the principal to “get the ball rolling,” even though that will delay being able to fund grants only from the interest earned. That makes it even more important for you to support the foundation now, to help it grow.

An honorarium is a token payment given to speakers as thanks for their presentation. A number of those payments were donated to the foundation by speakers, for a total of \$800. While few of us give presentations, it is an excellent precedent that so many of our more talented members have decided to make their thank you payments do double duty in this way.

Several members liked the idea of an Azalea Research Foundation even before it became official, and donated a total of \$110 to show their support for the concept of azalea research.

The Azalea Research Foundation is now a reality, thanks to the efforts of its committee and our farsighted Board of Directors. Now it is the job of each of us to support the Azalea Research Foundation with our money—to make azalea research a reality as well. If you’ve read this far, you must be interested, so mail a check today in care of Jim Thornton, 884 June Drive S.W., Conyers GA 30093. You may also contact him by phone at 770-483-1593 or by e-mail at jimpatsy@comcast.net.

New Members

Brookside

James Rieden
104 Bishop Dr.
Silver Spring, MD 20905

Tri-State

Kris Perry
3166 Valleybrook Ct
Newburgh, IN 47630

Vaseyi

Laura Johnson
Bartlett Tree Research Lab
13768 Hamilton Road
Charlotte, NC 28278-7213

Beverly & Luther Middleton

216 Park Lane
Hendersonville, NC 28791

Thomas & Teri Hudson Wright

212 Old Hwy 20
Alexander, NC 28701

At Large

Gay Austin
405 Marion Avenue
McComb, MS 39648-2709

Vernon Bush
2116 Southpark Blvd
Huntsville, AL 35803

Ron Klingaman
1127 Osage Drive
Stillwater, OK 74075

Regina Mullen
P.O. Box 725
Yarmouth Port, MA 02675-0725

Chen Nien-Chou
1F, No. 4, Lane 10, Yung-jen Rd
Yung-he City, Tapei County,
234 Taiwan

Harrell's Nursery
Winfred Harrell
3315 English Road
Plant City, FL 33567

Dana Ressler
852 Conowingo Rd
Conowingo, MD 21918

M. Isabel Sprenger
Casilla 124
Quillota, 228000, Chile



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Submit address changes to:
Carol Flowers, ASA Secretary
700 New Hampshire NW, Apt. 1011
Washington, D.C. 20037
E-mail: vze1onzd@verizon.net

“Say, Isn’t that an Elephant in the Living Room?”

—*Rhododendron colemanii* at Callaway Gardens

Ron Miller—Pensacola, Florida

Even folks who wouldn’t know a honeysuckle from a honeywagon know about *Rhododendron prunifolium* at Callaway Gardens. The end of July to early September brings a pilgrimage of azalea enthusiasts and ordinary sane citizens to the gardens where hundreds—perhaps thousands—of red to orange azaleas offer customers a spectacle such as no plant hunter has ever viewed in the wild, nay, not even in Providence Canyon. The management, conscious of their award-winning signature collection, capitalizes on this grand display by dedicating a peak weekend to showcase their resort and their collection.

It was, however, during an off-season week this year, while on my annual early May trek to find new Red Hills azalea sites and to gather DNA samples, that I detoured by way of Callaway to revisit a row of *Rhododendron colemanii* seen two years before during *R. prunifolium* season. Though Clarence Towe (who never exaggerates) had assured me that many more would materialize at bloom time, I was amazed to find the median of the main entrance road lined by four- and five-foot *R. colemanii* plants in full array. Entering, amazement changed to dumbfoundedness. Almost tree-sized Red Hills azaleas popped up everywhere: around the chapel (mostly pinks), along the roads, by the lakes, in clearings, here and there, often displayed in lines where truly monster plants grow. Not only that, there were flower forms quite as fine as, if not better than, anything encountered in the wild. Perhaps there was a lower percentage of yellows than seen elsewhere in a few choice spots, but the big flat-faced, blotched whites were often wide indeed; and the pinks—ah, the pinks—were the best ever.

How many are there, total? Sipping my second drink the evening after, I guessed maybe one thousand. Over coffee in the cold light of the next dawn, five hundred plus, at least. In numbers, the *Rhododendron prunifolium* plants probably exceed them; but since a sixty-year-old, multistemmed Red Hills azalea is a far heftier brute than any plumleaf azalea, *R. colemanii* surely tops *R. prunifolium* at the gardens in sheer



Photo Ron Miller

▲ The entrance to Callaway Gardens includes an iconic sign featuring a white azalea.

biomass. Does no one, including the management, visit Callaway around May Day? Can anyone ignore such a spectacle simply because the azaleas were once of an uncertain kind or were once dismissed (as some of the very few labels indicate) as hybrids? In early May, if one sees a white or pinkish azalea above eye level at Callaway, it’s doubtlessly *R. colemanii*. I, if anyone, know that species up close and personal, and I have the scratches and the tick bites to prove it.

Though, as one gathers, these plants were hauled in during Callaway’s midcentury hoarding period as *Rhododendron alabamense* or *R. alabamense* x *R. canescens*, a tour of the Gardens turned up a single, remote, puny patch of genuine *R. alabamense*—which seems rather telling, since *R. alabamense* is downright common just west of Pine Mountain along the Chattahoochee. That stray *R. alabamense* may well be native.

The gardens certainly have *R. flammeum* in abundance from nearby counties to the east. Fred Galle and company must have thought that the ingathered whites satisfied their Alabama azalea imperative, an understandable miscue before those “alabamense” became 25 feet tall and grew several 3- or even 4-inch stems. At this date, we have no excuse. Dr. Tom Ranney of North Carolina State University has tested a number of samples and has found them to be tetraploid. Besides their reluctance to reach pulpwood-timber size, true *R. alabamense* and its hybrids are rather stubbornly diploid.

If S. D. Coleman Sr., was indeed the supplier, he must have collected seed or runners near his home at Ft. Gaines, Georgia. Such variety and quality could only have come from a very diverse colony or colonies



Photo Ron Miller

near at hand. I have poked around the immediate Ft. Gaines area for an extensive colony and at most have stumbled upon sites at Georgetown and north. Some day—

A number of azalea enthusiasts have asked me, as species author, to escort them to *Rhododendron colemanii* in the flesh. Though it's fun to show off one's children, such an indulgence carries two downsides. First, it means that I am obligated to play tour guide during the brief window when hunting alone for Red Hills azalea's genetic and geographical variants can be efficient. Second, and far more important, colonies of *R. colemanii* are often small and vulnerable. I've already rued my naiveté in showing colonies to trusted friends, only to return for replicate DNA samples to specific sites, stepping instead into those tell-tale round holes that all of us recognize and most of us have dug. Hidden inside every azalea enthusiast while admiring a remarkable plant in the wild is a demonic digger whispering "mine mine mine" and plotting a stealthy return later.

Thus, Callaway Gardens represents an ideal alternative. It precludes temptation. No tour guide is needed, only a car and 15 bucks. It is closer to population centers than are the native Coastal Zone sites where the ticks and the fire ants wander and the catbriars and the poison ivy grow free. With

▲ Callaway Gardens features an extensive collection of *Rhododendron colemanii*.

▼ Almost tree-sized Red Hills azaleas popped up throughout the gardens.



Photo Ron Miller



Photo: Ron Miller

▲ ▼ Colonies of *R. colemanii* are often small and vulnerable. Callaway represents an ideal alternative.



Photo: Ron Miller

handy restaurants and flush toilets, Callaway shares none of the rigors that characterize unpaved nature red in tooth and claw. And it simply holds more *Rhododendron colemanii* than I have seen altogether elsewhere, period. Try May 1, plus or minus a week.

You would think that the Callaway management might consider giving their world-class collection-by-accident a marquee billing alongside that of their intentional *Rhododendron prunifolium* hoard. Well, it seems encouraging that as I left the gardens, I noticed that their iconic sign displays a white azalea.

Ron Miller (rhodokiller@cox.net) is a retired professor of English Renaissance literature, a frustrated grower of cool-climate azaleas and rhododendrons in Zone 9, a superannuated plant hunter, and the species author of *Rhododendron colemanii*.

Callaway Gardens® Admission

Admission gate opens daily at 9 a.m. Closing times are: 5 p.m., January 1 to March 18; 6 p.m., March 19 to Sunday preceding Labor Day; and 5 p.m., Labor Day to December 31.

Directions

Callaway Gardens® is in Pine Mountain, Georgia, 60 minutes southwest of Atlanta and 30 minutes north of Columbus.

If using an online mapping service like MapQuest, please use the address "5887 Georgia Highway 354." Please note that this address is for the Real Estate Office entrance, very close to the main entrance of Callaway Gardens.

If you are traveling from:

Columbus, Georgia (30 miles) - Take Interstate 185 North to Ga. Hwy. 18 East (exit 34). Turn right off Hwy. 18 to the entrance of Callaway Gardens.

Atlanta, Georgia (70 miles) - Take Interstate 85 South to Interstate 185 South (exit 21). From Interstate 185, exit at U. S. Hwy. 27 (exit 42). Follow Hwy. 27 South to Pine Mountain. In Pine Mountain, turn right onto Hwy. 354 West. Proceed to Ga. Hwy. 18 and turn left into Callaway Gardens.

Lodging

Four types of accommodations are available at Callaway Gardens:

Mountain Creek® Inn features tastefully decorated guest rooms, and is conveniently close to restaurants, shops and attractions.

The Lodge at Callaway Gardens features 150 guest rooms and suites. Exterior balconies with a view of the surrounding forest or beautiful gardens from every guest room bring the beauty of the outdoors inside.

The Cottages at Callaway Gardens are ideal for family vacations. Nestled among tall pines, each features a living and dining area, fireplace, full kitchen, screened porch and deck. Cottages are available with one or two bedrooms.

The Villas at Callaway Gardens feature a spacious living and dining area, fireplace, full kitchen, separate bath for each bedroom, sun deck, washer/dryer and screened porch or patio. Villas are available with one, two, three or four bedrooms.

What Are the Best Trees Under Which to Plant?

Will Ferrell—Kernersville, North Carolina

We do not always have a choice about the kind of trees under which we grow our beloved woodland plants. But when we do, there arises the question: Which trees are optimal?

“None” is probably the best answer. Afternoon shade on the north or east side of your tall house or a tall garden wall is probably the most favorable site of all—if you manage any possible lime leaching from masonry. For example, a variegated Japanese maple (“Beni shichihenge”) that I planted in such a situation grew much more vigorously than one I observed growing with only moderate root competition in an open woodland.

Having said that, I loved trees before I loved azaleas, and I adore woodland gardens. Permit me to share this tangential bit of good tidings: The Moravians settling the area of piedmont North Carolina in which I live—they called it Wachovia—catalogued all the varieties of trees growing here in the 1760s. All those varieties are still living here 250 years later.

Answering the question of which trees are friendlier to under-planting is fraught with subjectivity. The answers that I put forth are more suggestive than definitive, but are based on some years of observation and questioning of others with particular knowledge.

Tulip poplar seems to be an excellent tree under which to grow, though its big leaves have potential to smother tiny plants when they fall in the autumn. On the other hand, long-leaf or loblolly pines provide an ideal mulch and seem very friendly to under-planting. Their negative is that a pure stand of them produces intolerable spring pollen. Black gums seem excellent also and often provide truly beautiful fall color as a bonus. I think my optimal woodland would have a combination of these three trees, limbed up as far as practical.

White oaks are thought to be relatively good trees to underplant. In my experience, red oaks are okay but not great, providing substantial root competition. Willow oaks seem to be the worst of the oak family. Acorns of all can present a nuisance.

Two trees with outstanding blooms appear to me to be good candidates for underplanting: Chinese fringetree and yellow-wood. The latter, whose panicles evoke fairy tales, can be bloom-shy and should not be planted where it will be much shaded by other trees.

Persimmon trees do not seem too bad. Green and white ash are pretty good in my observation, though be aware that they leaf out a little later, as does the decorative sourwood, and therefore would not protect any early or mid-season blooms from sun deterioration. Ashes also can have some disease problems when stressed.

Although I’ve read contrary opinion, an American

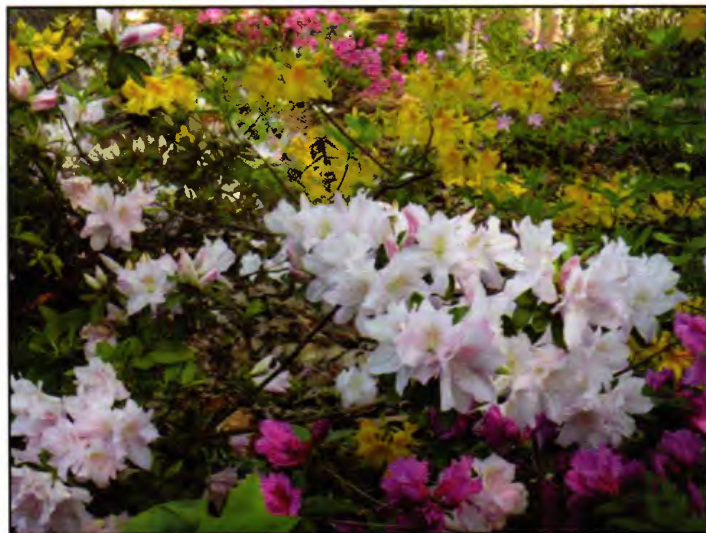


Photo Will Ferrell

▲ These azaleas (‘Willie May’, ‘Herbert’, and ‘Admiral Semmes’) are growing under Tulip Poplar and Red Oak trees.

▼ This Ilam deciduous azalea ‘Peachy Keen’ grows under Tulip Poplar.

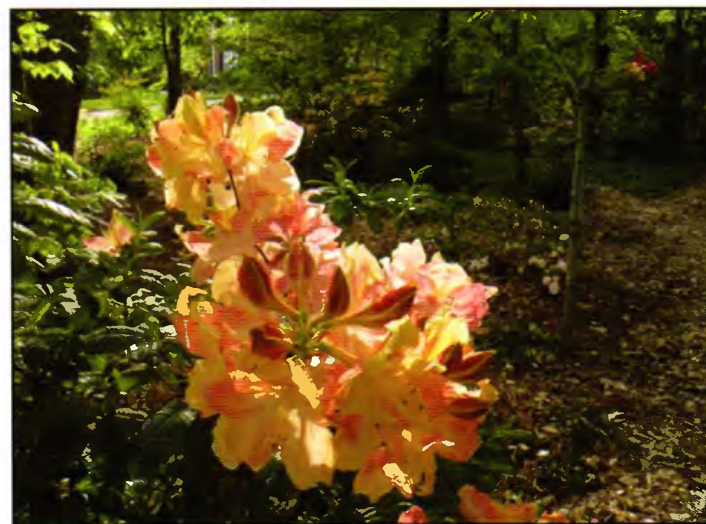


Photo Will Ferrell

elm and tall limbed-up dogwood seem tolerably good to under-plant. I’m less sure about the graceful winged elm or the excellent Chinese elm. Ginkgo trees seem reasonably friendly to under-planting.

Putatively the worst trees to plant under are probably black walnut, the noble American beech, and maples—though I have observed successful exceptions with all three. Pignut hickories in my experience are difficult to grow under. I have wondered if pignut hickories don’t share the chemical effect of the walnut, if not through its roots, perhaps through its nuts. Shagbark hickory seems a little better. The beautiful fall color and indestructibility of the sweet-gum does not make it a good candidate, even without considering its spiny fruit. Ironwoods also seem to provide



Photo Will Ferrell

▲ An individual Yellowwood panicle with a *Rhododendron calendulaceum* in the background.

significant root competition. Little-leaf linden and Zelkova are also unfavorable.

Well, at worst perhaps, I have initiated a conversation on a useful subject. I would invite you, the readers, to comment via letters to the editor with your insights or experiences. ASA members are uniquely able to provide guidance to a topic professional horticulturalists do not appear to have addressed. A serious rhododendron grower once told me he grew azaleas under eastern red-cedar, which intrigues me and makes me curious to see his garden.

Before leaving the subject, it probably behooves me to mention a couple of points that may not be obvious to the novice shade gardener. There is something to be said for removing any unnecessary trees, even if they are the friendlier types mentioned above. This is especially true if they block morning sun. A few well-spaced majestic limbed-up trees is probably ideal, both to minimize root competition and reduce shade density. Personally, I am too paranoid to follow this advice completely; I fear that future lightning strike or hurricane too much to not have a few trees of the next generation around.

I do want to emphasize the benefits of limbing up as much as is practical on both favorable and unfavorable trees. When first I began to think on this subject, I thought more in terms of root structure and competition. However, I've noticed that in general the difficult trees are the ones which create dense shade (e.g., maple, American beech, little-leaf linden, willow oak). I have observed examples of these trees having been aggressively limbed up and plants being successfully grown under them. So raise that canopy up with a passion.

Another common sense generalization: When you start amending an area under a tree to plant your azalea, pay attention to what density of roots you encounter. If they

Scientific Tree Names

- Tulip poplar — *Liriodendron tulipifera*
- Long-leaf pine — *Pinus palustris*
- Loblolly pine — *Pinus taeda*
- Black gum or Black tupelo — *Nyssa sylvatica*
- White oak — *Quercus alba*
- Red oak — *Quercus rubra*
- Willow oak — *Quercus phellos*
- Chinese fringetree — *Chionanthus retusus*
- Gingko — *Gingko biloba*
- Yellow-wood — *Cladastris kentuckea/lutea*
- Persimmon — *Diospyros virginiana*
- Green ash — *Fraxinus pennsylvanica*
- White ash — *Fraxinus americana*
- Sourwood — *Oxydendrum arboreum*
- American elm — *Ulmus americana*
- Dogwood — *Cornus florida*
- Winged elm — *Ulmus alata*
- Chinese elm — *Ulmus parviflora*
- Black walnut — *Juglans nigra*
- American beech — *Fagus grandiflora*
- Maples — *Acer*
- Pignut hickory — *Carya glabra*
- Shagbark hickory — *Carya ovata*
- Sweet-gum — *Liquidambar styraciflua*
- Ironwood/American hornbeam — *Carpinus caroliniana*
- Little-leaf linden — *Tilia cordata*
- Zelkova — *Zelkova serrata*
- Eastern red cedar — *Juniperus virginiana*

are fierce, consider another site because those roots will love your amended soil. Some times you will find a more favorable spot closer to the trunk of a mature tree (inside the circumference of primary feeder roots).

If you get an abundance of rain, all of this matters significantly less. Lucky you!

Note: In thinking about this article, I have questioned and consulted a large number of gardeners. Particularly helpful to me were Dr. Larry Mellichamp of the University of North Carolina Charlotte; gardener extraordinaire Graham Ray; and Michael Dirr's Manual of Woody Landscape Plants.

Will Ferrell is a semi-retired dentist whose interests include gardening, history, economics, ideas, and music.