

Ericaceous Camaraderie: Examples of Nice Relationships Amongst Azaleas and Plants Friendly to Them

Will Ferrell—Kernersville, North Carolina

When first I developed an interest in gardening, I remember being somewhat put off by azaleas because so often I would see yards with orangy red azaleas planted near hot pink ones. The frequency of this kind of disharmony involving azaleas is easy to understand: The optimal time to plant is in the fall when conventional azaleas are out of bloom. Or you just see a really pretty one blooming at a nursery that by itself is so stunning that you have to take it home and plant it somewhere.

I realize that for many azalea lovers, my reaction would be regarded as a bit, let's say, fastidious. But for those of us

who want to go beyond the joys of plant collecting, there are lots of challenges of bloom time and hue—even the effect on hue by the amount of sun exposure to the bloom—to be taken into account.

Every year I end up moving plants to be with more congenial neighbors. As I am writing these words (June 2011), I am contemplating moving either a *Campanula poscharskyana* or a *Hydrangea* 'Endless Summer' to bloom next to the late blooming Glenn Dale 'Sagittarius'; they bloom the same time with complementary colors and all want about the same sun/shade in Zone 7a.



Photo Will Ferrell

▲ 'Conversation Piece' with Hosta 'Serendipity' & Burgundy Oxalis.

▼ Siberian Iris backed by *Rhododendron* 'Consolini 343'.



Photo Will Ferrell

▲ *R. canescens* with *Cornus florida*—two happy natives.

▼ 'Nancy of Robinhill' with Green and Gold (*Chrysogonum virginianum*).

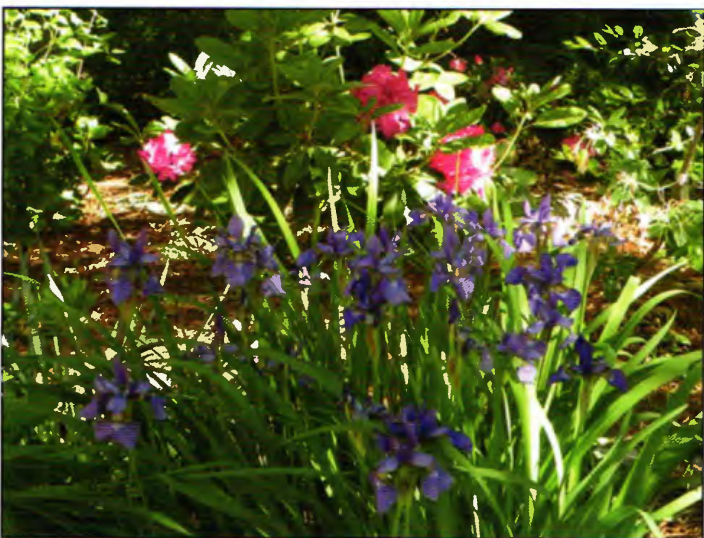


Photo Will Ferrell



Photo Will Ferrell

At any rate, I thought it might be fun to share a few photos of harmonious combinations that have given me pleasure in my yard. I have included among the photos little of my very favorite combination of pastel pink or lavender paired with purple azaleas—in this vein, I love ‘Springtime Blush’ with ‘Karen’, ‘Willie Mae’ with ‘Herbert’, ‘Madame Pericat’ with ‘Purple Splendor’, ‘Fairfax’ with ‘Youth’ and ‘Martha Hitchcock’, ‘Ring’s Orchido’ with ‘Terry’, and ‘Watchet’ with ‘Catawbiense Boursalt’. I highly recommend these pairings.

Another (unphotographed) great combination which begs to be mentioned is the Satsuki ‘Kusadama’, ‘Nova Zembla’, and cranesbill geranium ‘Johnson’s Blue’. This is a very open-ended subject. Perhaps my throwing out these combinations will provoke other azalea lovers to share their creative pairings.

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



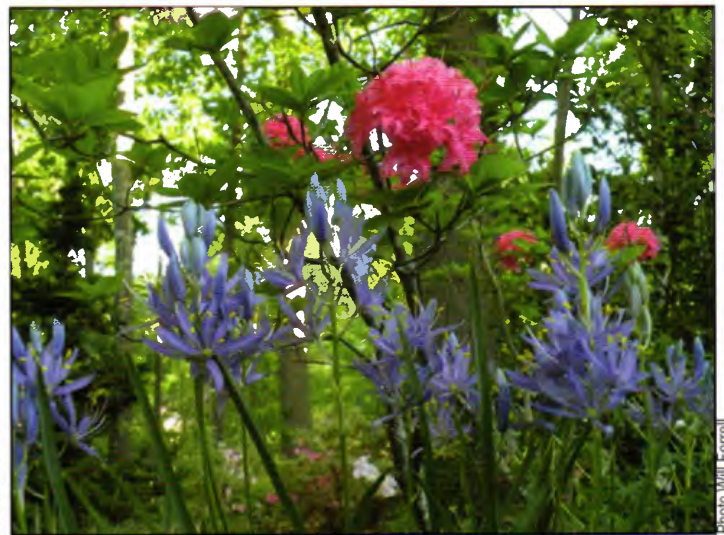
▲ George Ring hybrid ‘Fairfax’ with violas.

▼ Camassia and deciduous hybrid ‘Homebush’.



▲ Wyatt Lefever deciduous hybrid backed by ‘Catawbiense Boursalt’.

▼ Heat-tolerant Exbury ‘Klondyke’ backed by ‘Elsie Lee’.



▼ Illam deciduous hybrid ‘Yellow Beauty’ nestled with ‘Anna Krushke’.

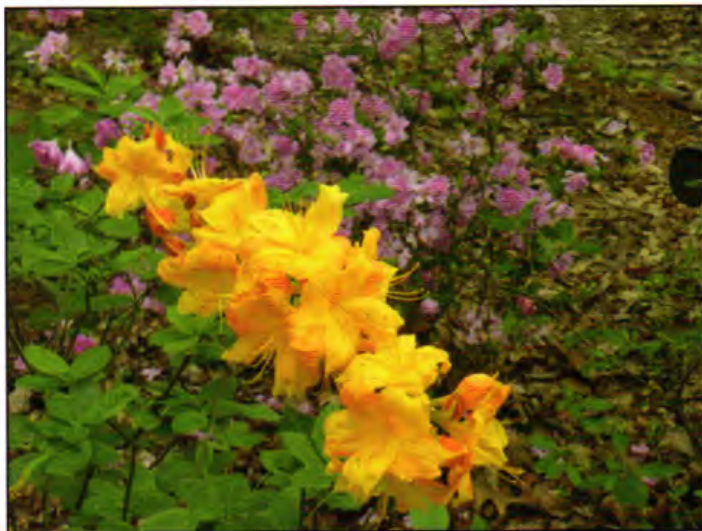




Photo Will Ferrell

▲ Aromi deciduous hybrid 'Clearcreek' adjacent 'Kaye Player'.

▼ 'HR Schroeder' backed by Japanese Maple 'Butterfly' backlit by sunset.



Photo Will Ferrell

▲ Kurume azalea 'Cattleya' with Japanese Maple 'Orangeolua'.

▼ Harris azalea 'Rivermist' and this heat-tolerant Primula love each other.

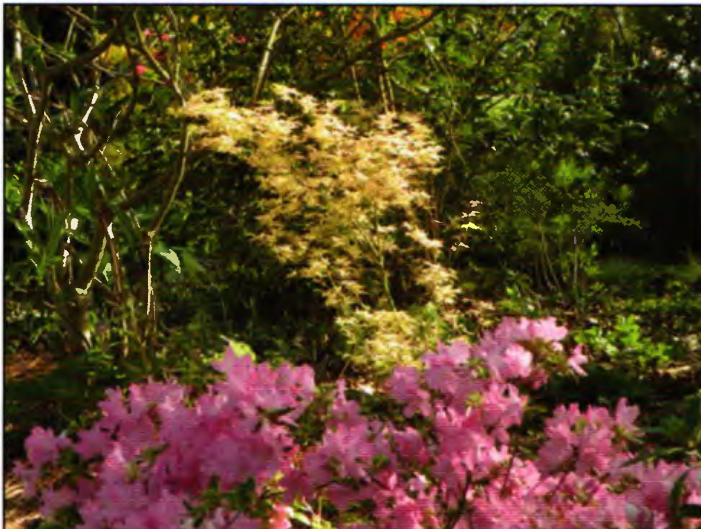


Photo Will Ferrell

▼ Encore® azalea 'Autumn Starlight' with *Phlox divaricata* 'Louisiana'



Photo Will Ferrell

▼ 'Springtime Blush' with ajuga; also combines superbly with 'Karen' which is nearby.



Photo Will Ferrell



Photo Will Ferrell



Photo Will Ferrell

▲ 'H.R. Schroeder' with *Phlox divaricata*.



Photo Will Ferrell

▲ 'A. Bedford' backed by 'Klondyke' and 'Elsie Lee'.

▼ 'Madame Butterfly' and 'Koromo Shikibu' are downright incestuous.

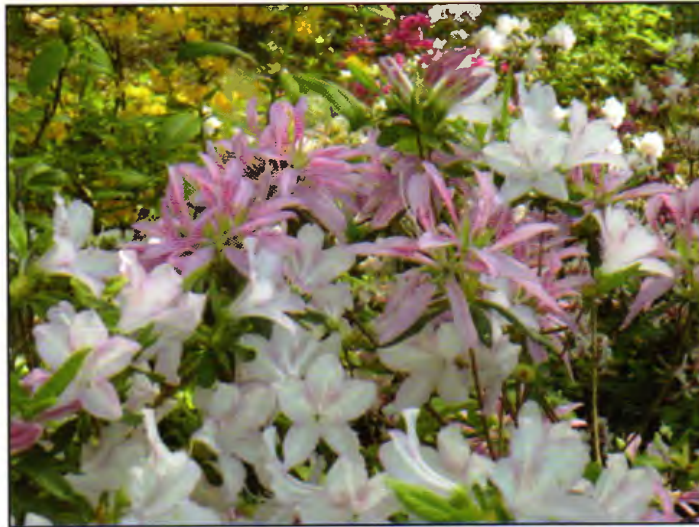


Photo Will Ferrell

▼ Another view of 'H.R. Schroeder' with *Phlox divaricata*, pansies, violas.



Photo Will Ferrell

▼ Galle's 'Choice Cream' backed by 'Elsie Lee'.

▼ 'Sunglow' with *Trillium grandiflora*.



Photo Will Ferrell



Photo Will Ferrell