

The background of the cover is a close-up photograph of azalea flowers. In the foreground, there is a large cluster of bright white azalea flowers with prominent yellow centers and dark brown stamens. Behind them, there are many pink and light purple azalea flowers, some with darker pink streaks on their petals. The lighting is bright, creating a vibrant and detailed scene.

The Azalean

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Journal of the Azalea Society of America

# President's Letter

J Jackson—Trade, Tennessee



Dear Azalea Friends,

Another fall season is already here; they seem to come around so quickly now. The late *Hydrangea paniculata* forms are lighting up the garden for us and the buckeye trees on the creek are already turning and dropping their fruit. Lindy and I have been watching azalea seed pods for signs of being ripe enough to harvest. Many of our chapters will be gathering to have seed exchange meetings in the next couple of months. The ASA seed exchange work will start pretty soon. This October our native azalea friends will be going out into the wilds of the southern Appalachians to collect seed from garden worthy plants. Some of this seed will be available through the seed exchange. Please think about donating seed to the seed exchange this year. Evergreen azalea seed is very welcome as well.

Our membership numbers are holding fairly steady. I am really excited that the Ben Morrison Chapter has come out of dormancy and wish to express many thanks to Budne Reinke for stepping up and becoming the chapter president. This is some of the best news I have received since we enjoyed such a wonderful convention in Williamsburg.

It is time for nominations for our national BOD members. A new president and vice president will be nominated and elected. The secretary, treasurer and national directors' positions are also slated for the ballot. Barbara Stump and Pam Fitch are planning to continue with The Azalean. Their work is really wonderful and so important to the ASA. Please make your wishes for new officers and BOD members known to your Chapter president or to our secretary, Leslie Nanney ([leslie.nanny@gmail.com](mailto:leslie.nanny@gmail.com)). This society business is very important, and I would like to see more interest and involvement from our members.

Best regards,  
J

▼ *Rhododendron prunifolium*, plumleaf azalea.



Photo: Charles R. Andrews III

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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### On the Cover

The Huang Hybrids are still a little-known evergreen hybrid azalea group even though they have fascinated some ASA members since at least 1981. Nurseryman Pete Vines grew a selection of them for the 1998 ASA convention in McClean, VA. This example, Hu 1-6-72 from the Palmers' Azalea Hill Nursery in Arkansas, is a current offering. Using the code that Mr. Huang set up, this means this azalea would have bloomed in Shanghai in early April, is a small hose-in-hose bloom, and is either bi-colored or variegated. Up to 158 different numbered selections appear in various lists. The Huangs display a myriad of colors, flower forms, and habits. Some are noteworthy for being tough plants that are very floriferous. See related article on p.52.



# The Huang Azaleas—Do They Need English Cultivar Names?

By *Ronnie Palmer—Pine Bluff, Arkansas*

In 1981, John G. (Jack) Shaffer, the editor of The Azalean newsletter had an article on new “Chinese Azaleas.” That is roughly 35 years ago, a short time in azalea years. Dr. George Drake, proprietor of Big Rock Garden Nursery in Bellingham, Washington, had received a shipment of 143 rooted cuttings from the People’s Republic of China. These azaleas were the end product of hybridization work by Mr. Teh Ling Huang.

The 1981 article stated<sup>1</sup>:

“Dr. Drake understands that the better of the Huang cultivars are the early-flowering hose-in-hose and the late-flowering doubles and semi-doubles. The early-blooming varieties tend to be hose-in-hose while the late-flowering tend to be single (20 varieties) or double (19 varieties). About a half of all the late-blooming varieties are reported to be bi-color while only four of the 28 early blooming varieties are bi-color. Of the 143 cultivars, 28 are early bloomers, 43 early mid-season, 26 late midseason and 46 late bloomers. Most are compact in form and are probably only marginally hardy, given the parentage and the fact that they were hybridized in a part of China where the mean temperature in January is 37°F and the minimum temperature in January is 10°F. July temperatures average 73°F. Annual rainfall is 45 inches.”

Dr. Drake distributed the plants to various gardens and interested nurserymen. Among those receiving plants was Mr. Pete Vines, a nurseryman in Springfield, Virginia. In his plant catalog, Mr. Vines described the Huangs and explained the

unusual code that was used in lieu of names.<sup>2</sup> His catalog description was placed on the ASA website. A portion of the article is shown below. The full article can be accessed by going to <http://www.azaleas.org/huang.html>.

“Although many varieties have not been grown for sufficient time to allow a comprehensive evaluation, and the favorable winter conditions during the past two years have precluded adequate cold hardiness evaluation, it has become abundantly clear to me that they represent a major hybridizing effort and will ultimately come to include some of the “best 100” azaleas known to the Western world. The range of plant characteristics is very broad; including both small and very large blooms, small

▼ Table 1

<b>Code Table 1</b>			
<b>First Digit</b> - bloom times shown below are in Springfield, VA			
1 Early April	2 Late April	3 Mid May	4 June
<b>Second Digit</b> - type and size of bloom			
1 Large Single (diam. > 5 cm.)	2 Medium Single	3 Small Single	["Single" = "sgl"] (diam. < 3 cm.)
4 Large Hose in Hose	5 Medium Hose in Hose	6 Small Hose in Hose	["Hose in Hose" = "hih"]
7 Double ["dbl"], Semi-Double ["sdb"], and irregular Hose in Hose ["ihh"]			
<b>Third and Fourth Digit</b> - color of bloom			
11-19 White	21-29 Light Pink	31-39 Pink	
41-49 Lavender	51-59 Rosy/Purple-Red	61-69 Red	
71-89 Bi-Color or Variegated			



Photo Ronnie Palmer

▲ Hu 2-7-51



Photo Ronnie Palmer

▲ Hu 2-5-71

▼ Hu 2-1-22, a favorite of Pete Vines who called it "Tiananmen Square," according to William C. Miller III.

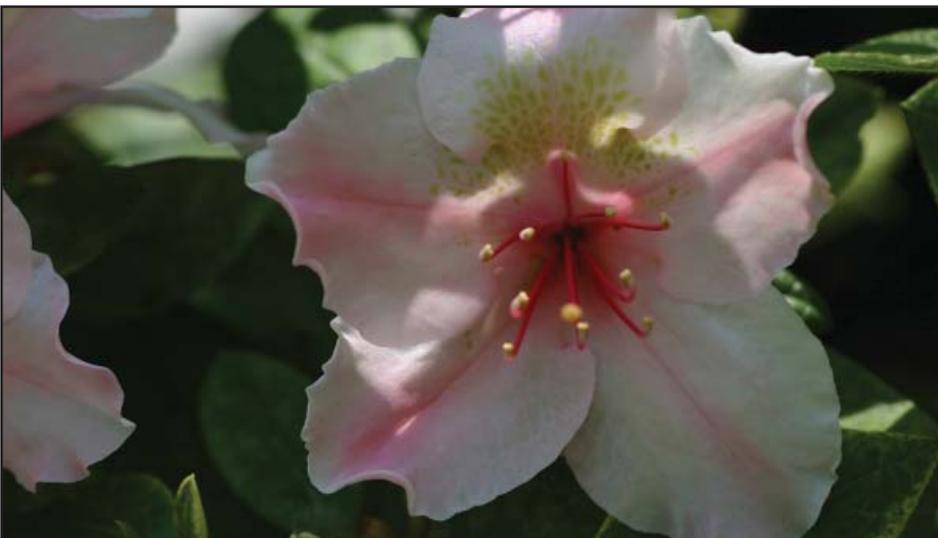


Photo Ronnie Palmer

and extremely large foliage, plants with varying growth characteristics, and all major bloom forms. All cultivar's were introduced without names, using a four-digit numerical code (2-1-62 as an example)." The code translates as shown in Table 1, p. 52.

This system is convenient in many ways. It allows us to look at a cultivar and determine if we have a correct plant. The second digit is very helpful in that regard. The first digit is rather broad. I have found that all of the plants beginning with a 1- do not bloom at the same time. As far as the 3rd and 4th digits are concerned, I am at a loss for the meaning of 51 versus 59. Orange-pink is a common color in the Huangs, but I am not sure what digit represents that color.

A difficulty that arises with this system is that when 1-6-72 is entered into a spreadsheet it immediately becomes January 6, 1972. I have noticed that many of us now list this plant as Hu 1-6-72 to avoid the date problem.

Mr. Vines was a primary distributor of these plants. It is obvious that he was quite excited about this group of plants. Two places that received the plants were the Dallas Arboretum and Botanical Garden and Auburn University. We were allowed to get plants and cuttings from the Auburn research project when it came to an end. Sadly, all of the plants in the research project were given away or destroyed to make room for other agricultural research. I am unsure of the conditions of the plants at the Dallas garden.

In my opinion, it is time to give the Huangs attractive cultivar names in English for marketing purposes. When the Kurumes were introduced in 1918, many were given English names. Do you recognize the names 'Kirin', 'Ima-shojo', or 'Ho-o'? It is more likely that 'Coral Bells', 'Christmas Cheer', and 'Appleblossom' are more easily recognized. I think the renaming was a good move. These plants are still being grown by wholesale growers after nearly 100 years. In reality, Hu 2-1-22 is an identifier that only a collector could love. A cultivar name



Photo Ronnie Palmer

▲ Hu 2-5-41



Photo Ronnie Palmer

▲ Huang 4-2-84

▼ The collection of 16 Huang Hybrids in the Ruby M. Mize Azalea Garden at Stephen F. Austin State University's SFA Gardens in Nacogdoches, Texas. This collection was seen and obtained at the 1999 ASA convention in Mobile, AL.

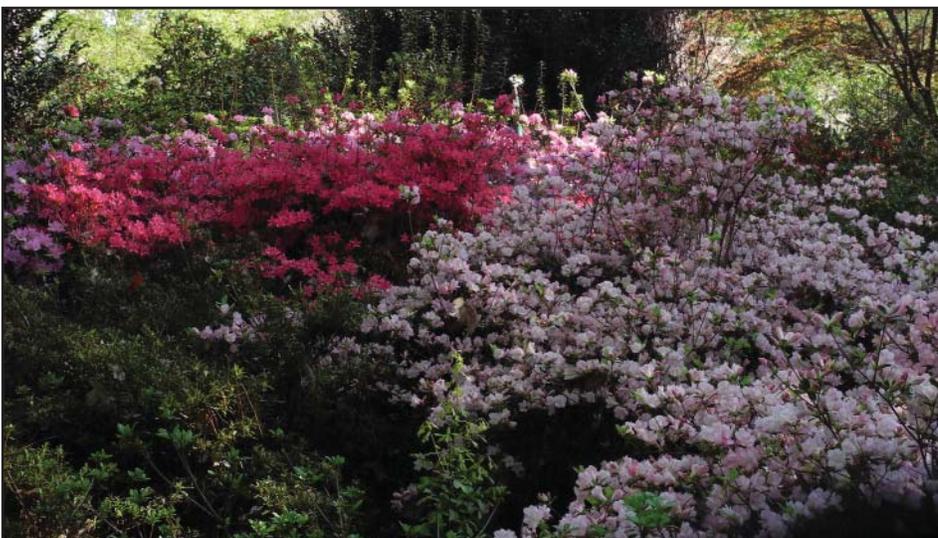


Photo Ronnie Palmer

in English would make a pretty azalea more attractive and acceptable to the buying public.

Personally, I do not have a great imagination for cultivar names. I think we need to give the Huangs names that are easily recognized. Dr. David Creech of SFA Gardens at Stephen F. Austin University in Nacogdoches, Texas, has volunteered to help us with this endeavor. So now we need some catchy names. My only suggestions at this writing are 'Genghis Khan', 'Marco Polo', and 'Kubla Khan'.

If you would like to join us in this endeavor, please contact me at [Ronnie.Palmer88@yahoo.com](mailto:Ronnie.Palmer88@yahoo.com). We are in need of digital photos and any other information that you might have. Pictures of several Huang azaleas are on our website: [azaleahillgardens-arkansas.com](http://azaleahillgardens-arkansas.com).

## References and Notes

1. Shaffer, John G., Editor. "Chinese Azaleas." *The Azalean*. 1981. III(4):11-12.
2. Vines, Pete. Huang Code Table. "1990 Reference Guide and Catalog." Vines Horticulture Gardens. Pete Vines publisher. Used by permission on the ASA website: Huang Hybrid Azaleas. <http://www.azaleas.org/huang.html>.
3. All material reproduced in this article is shown as previously published, except size of bloom was added based on a second version of the code table (source long forgotten) from the files of William C. Miller III.

Ronnie Palmer and his wife Donna own and have operated an evergreen azalea nursery in Pine Bluff, Arkansas, since 1975. They specialize in Glenn Dales, Back Acres, Robin Hill, Satsuki, Huang, Holly Springs and some elepidote rhododendrons. The over 5-acre garden area contains large collections of the azaleas listed above as well as collections from some of our newer hybridizers. They have about 60 Huang Hybrids, most of which came from the Camp Hill project by Auburn University. They are in the process of establishing legacy plantings of Glenn Dale and Earl Sommerville azaleas.

# Azalea Research Project Background

By Dr. Juliana Medeiros—Kirtland, Ohio

[The Summer 2016 issue of The Azalean published a report by Dr. Medeiros that was given to the Azalea Research Foundation Committee. What follows is more properly an introduction to the research. We will print a summary of the final project report when the research is completed, Ed.]

Have you ever wondered why some azaleas grow better in warm, sunny locations, while others do better in cool climates with lots of shade? Scientists working at The Holden Arboretum in Kirtland, OH, funded in part by the Azalea Research Foundation, are currently conducting research aimed at solving this mystery. Dr. Juliana Medeiros and student intern Sharon Danielson, are examining differences among *Rhododendron* species in leaf hydraulic conductance, or the capacity of the leaf to replace water lost through evaporation. This trait is one of the most important physiological components of plant tolerance to heat and drought, and is determined primarily by the leaf structure along with the temperature and humidity of the air. The broad diversity of leaf morphology across genus *Rhododendron* suggests that leaf hydraulic conductance may play an important role in habitat diversity, but the functional significance of this has been understudied. Dr. Medeiros hypothesized that, compared to species from cool climates, those species native to warmer climates can transport more water through their leaves, preventing leaves from becoming dehydrated under higher rates of evaporation.

So far, this hypothesis has been supported, particularly in the evergreen *Rhododendrons*, but the study has also yielded some exciting discoveries about evergreen azaleas. Specifically, *R. kiusianum* has lower than expected leaf hydraulic conductance compared to other species from similar climates, while that of *R. yedoense* was higher than expected. Interestingly, these data show that plants from warmer climates do not always have a higher capacity to replace water to the leaves, suggesting that other leaf traits mediate

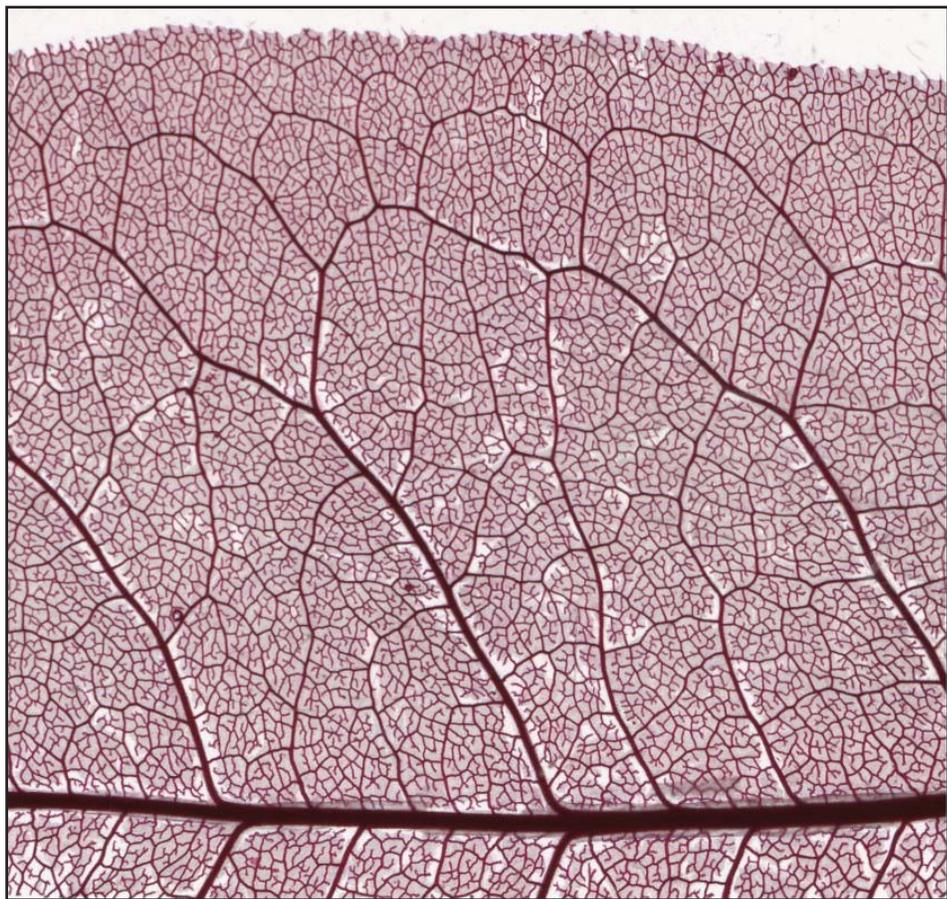


Photo: Aaron Baumgardner

▲ The leaf venation network of a deciduous azalea (*Rhododendron austrinum*), showing the vascular tissue in dark reddish-brown. The vascular tissue transports water to all the leaf cells, replacing water lost due to evaporation.

the leaf-climate relationship in evergreen azaleas. For example, if *R. kiusianum* leaves have a very thick leaf cuticle they could be protected from high rates of evaporation, even under very hot climate conditions. This could reduce the amount of resources used for leaf vascular tissue, which is costly to construct. On the other hand, the delicate leaves of *R. yedoense* may have a very thin cuticle, which would make them more vulnerable to desiccation, requiring higher density of leaf vascular tissue and greater leaf hydraulic conductance to maintain hydration. Data collection on the project continued through the summer, and current work includes examination of other leaf traits, like cuticle thickness and patterns of venation. In the end, this work is expected to provide new insights into the physiological mechanisms behind climatic hardiness in genus *Rhododendron* as well as to reveal variation that may be capitalized on in breeding for increased heat and drought tolerance.

Lead Researcher: Juliana Medeiros, Scientist, The Holden Arboretum, 9500 Sperry Rd., Kirtland, Ohio 44094, 440-602-3819, jmedeiros@holdenarb.org. Dr. Medeiros received her Ph.D. from the University of New Mexico and did her postdoctoral work at the University of Kansas.

# In Memory: Donald Hagen Voss 1922 - 2016

By William C. Miller III — Bethesda, Maryland

It is with sadness that I report the passing of Don Voss at the Fairfax Nursing Center in Fairfax, Virginia, in the early morning hours of August 12th.

When I first visited Don in Inova Hospital (also in Fairfax) on July 10th, it had been a rough week for him. He was very weak and ghostly pale. Over and above extreme dehydration, the experience had exacerbated an osteophyte-related swallowing problem and he had not been able to eat or drink anything by mouth since he was admitted. They had inserted a feeding tube through his nose which made conversation very difficult. After several days, the nasal feeding tube was withdrawn which made him much more comfortable. The story that he sheepishly related, in an almost apologetic tone, was horrible. It was July 4th and he had gone down into his basement to tighten a screw on some fixture. He had gotten down on one knee and discovered that he couldn't get up. He managed to get into a crouching position and found that he could not get up from that either. He decided to roll over onto his back, and he moved around on his basement floor (on his back) trying to figure out a way extricate himself from the situation. He remained in that position for several days. Don had lived alone since 2008, so he was truly on his own. Fortunately, when his cleaning lady arrived on her regular schedule and couldn't get in, she didn't just call it a day and go home. She had the presence of mind to go next door to get a key from Oswin Kummer, Don's next door neighbor. They discovered Don badly bruised and dehydrated having had nothing to eat or drink for several days. Despite Don's protests to the contrary, emergency services were summoned and Don was taken to Inova Hospital where he was admitted to the Progressive Coronary Care Unit. Evidently, that was where they had an available bed because he didn't have cardiac issues. Don was at Inova for several weeks. After they figured he was sufficiently stable,



Photo by William C. Miller III

▲ Don Voss (L) receives Distinguished Service Award from President L. Malcolm Clark at the 1993 ASA annual convention in Dallas, Texas.

▼ Don Voss at his customary workstation at the Herbarium, US National Arboretum, May 7, 2015.



Photo by Barbara Bullock, Curator of Azaleas and Rhododendron, USNA

he was moved to the Fairfax Nursing Center for rehabilitation. Because of his swallowing problem, the hospital had surgically fitted him with a tube that led directly to his stomach. The gastrostomy tube came with an owner's manual and from this point on, he would have to learn how to manage it. The staff was working towards Don recovering to the point where he could leave the Nursing Center. Unfortunately, he took a turn for the worse when he developed aspiration pneumonia. Despite their best efforts (antibiotics and supplemental oxygen), it was too much for his severely challenged condition.

Don was born on November 6, 1922 in New York City to Karl Voss and Donolda Hagen Voss. He graduated from Teaneck High School, Teaneck, New Jersey in June 1939. Following high school, he attended and graduated from the prestigious Phillips Academy, in Andover, Massachusetts in June 1940.



Photo by William C. Miller III

▲ Mary Rutley, Brookside Gardens Chapter Vice-President, presents the 2003 Frederic P. Lee Commendation to Donald Voss on December 7, 2003 at the Brookside Gardens Educational Center in Wheaton, Maryland.

Don proudly served his country in the military. He entered an Army ROTC program in May 1942 and went on active duty in April 1943. He was commissioned a 2nd Lieutenant in the Army Transportation Corps and his tours of duty included the Boston Port of Embarkation, Manila in the Philippine Islands, and Kobe, Japan. Reverting to reserve status in September 1946, he remained in the reserves until 1970, when he retired with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel.

Don's academic and civilian career record is equally remarkable. Entering Princeton University, he earned a BA in Public Affairs in 1947 and an MA in Economics in 1949. He found employment at Princeton where he held the positions of Assistant in Instruction and Instructor in Economics. In 1950, he was a junior economic analyst in the Investment Department of the Chemical Bank of New York. From 1952 to 1961 he was an Assistant Professor of Economics at Bucknell University. From 1961 to 1988, he was an Economic Intelligence Officer, in the Directorate of Intelligence at the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). During his career at the CIA, he was detailed (temporarily assigned) to the National War College faculty for the academic year 1977-1978. From 1978 to 1980 he was detailed as deputy director of the Office of Economic Research and Analysis, Bureau of Intelligence and Research at the State Department. While on detail at State, he was presented with the State Department's Tribute of Appreciation. The CIA subsequently awarded him their

Career Intelligence Medal by which the agency recognized his service and exceptional achievements that substantially contributed to the CIA's mission. When it came time to retire, Don was not destined for a rocking chair or inclined to become a "gentleman of leisure." He now had the time to freely pursue his many interests and avocations.

I first met Don in 1984 when, in my capacity as president of the Brookside Gardens Chapter, I invited him to speak at one of our regular chapter meetings. I had discovered that he was the son-in-law of Robert Gartrell, the developer of the Robin Hill Hybrids, and I expected that Don would be an interesting speaker. Noting Don's Vienna, Virginia address, I invited him to dinner at my house before the meeting to avoid the many problems associated with Washington rush-hour traffic which even in the 80's could drive a normal person to distraction. First impression—he was a perfect gentleman. He was quiet and unassuming, intelligent, and very precise in word and thought—positive qualities all too often found lacking in the general population. His Robin Hill presentation at the chapter meeting did not disappoint. It was excellent.

A skilled writer, Don's publication record is impressive. He has published in the areas of colorimetry, taxonomy, history, and plant behavior—topics that many people religiously avoid. His publication record included 32 articles in *The Azalean* and 38 articles in the *Journal of the American Rhododendron Society (JARS)*. His vocabulary and his ability to comprehend and convey difficult concepts in writing was enviable. On numerous occasions when reading Don's articles, I had to consult Webster's to look up the meaning of a word.<sup>1</sup> Don's willingness to serve as an officer (e.g., president of the Potomac Valley Chapter and District 9 alternate and director) or in an advisory capacity (e.g., the ARS Research Committee and the ARS Editorial Committee) was a major contribution to the ARS community. He was a leader in the ASA as well, and served as chairman of the ASA Board of Directors during a period when the ASA was ankle deep in growing pains. On the local level, he was a president of the ASA's Northern Virginia Chapter. His ability to write and his attention to detail made him an excellent reviewer for both the ASA and ARS publications. He served on *The Azalean's* Advisory Editorial Board beginning in 1987, and he was reviewing articles for the Fall 2016 issue when he passed away. An excellent manager, his experience and his no-nonsense approach made him a valuable resource, and I found him to be an effective sounding board for rough first drafts and for "second opinions." Hardly narrow in his interests, Don's avocations included rifle and pistol marksmanship, photography, botany, horticulture, and colorimetry. How many people do you know who have a spectrophotometer in their home library? He was much in demand as a flower show judge, and he was well known here and abroad for his expertise in and support of the various botanical codes and registries that we are all supposed to be familiar with and use.

Over the years, as Don became increasingly less mobile, his energetic stride gave way to an unsteady shuffle with a cane. He was 93 after all. I shuddered at the thought of his going up and down the stairs in his home and driving up

I-66 on his way to the US National Arboretum twice a week. By any measure and speaking from experience, Washington traffic is on a par with cruel and unusual punishment. We chatted on the phone fairly regularly—maybe once or twice a month—or more frequently when he had Arboretum news to report. He was interested in knowing what the ASA was doing, and he wanted my take on “current events,” foreign and domestic. Don made good use of the phone. The phone and email were important connections, his lifelines, to the outside world. Despite the ravages of old age, Don never quite lost his pedagogical bearing. Like any good educator, he was always patient and supportive of others. He strove for excellence in everything that he undertook. Like the people in the federal agencies during his professional career, the ASA and ARS people took notice. In 1993, the ASA presented him with a Distinguished Achievement Award at its annual convention in Dallas, Texas. In 2003, the Brookside Gardens Chapter honored him with their prestigious Frederic P. Lee Commendation. In 2010, the American Rhododendron Society honored him with a Gold Medal, their highest award.

Another very important chapter in Don’s life was his interest in the US National Arboretum. Many people knew about Don’s interest in the National Arboretum Herbarium, but that was only part of the story as revealed by the marvelous tribute written by Dr. Alan Whittemore, a Research Plant Taxonomist and Don’s supervisor at the Herbarium.<sup>2</sup> Selections from this follow:

“The Arboretum lost a valued colleague and very good friend when longtime volunteer Don Voss died on the 12th of August.

“Don first used the National Arboretum Herbarium in 1964, when his friend Henry Skinner was director. His father-in-law, Robert Gartrell, was a famed azalea breeder, and Don worked with him to document his breeding work and register the cultivars he bred. Don began volunteering regularly in the Herbarium in 1987, and continued for 29 years, often logging the most hours per year of any National Arboretum volunteer, despite his long, congested commute from Vienna, Virginia. He carried out major projects for the Herbarium, seeing Contribution Number 7 through to its completion and publication<sup>3</sup>, and thoroughly reviewing our type specimens and cultivated standards. He also made important contributions to the azalea community as an author, reviewer, and consulting expert for the major journals. Trained in economics, and employed for many years as a data analyst for the CIA, Don had the ability to be meticulous without losing sight of the big picture. He built up specialized knowledge in areas such as botanical nomenclature and the accurate description of colors, and his work will benefit plant scientists and growers for years to come. His contributions earned him the Gold Medal of the American Rhododendron Society in 2010.

“Don’s knowledge of plants and the rules for naming them was broad and detailed. He was always ready to help others who were interested in botany and horticulture, and his willingness to share his specialized knowledge in areas such as botanical nomenclature and the accurate description of colors has benefitted botanists and horticulturists all over the world.

“Over the past year, Don became noticeably less vigorous and less steady on his feet, while remaining mentally as sharp as ever. He continued to drive in to the National Arboretum twice a week until the beginning of July, when an accident at home sent him to the hospital, and then to a nursing home. At first, Don was hopeful that he would be able to move back into his home. However, treatment was complicated by several other medical conditions Don had been managing, and it became clear that Don wouldn’t be able to resume his independent life. He died the morning of Friday the 12th of August 2016.

“Don was an excellent companion—well-educated, well-read, with many interesting experiences and the ability to communicate clearly and vividly. He will be greatly missed by all of us who had the opportunity to know him and work with him.”

One of the very nice things about Dr. Whittemore’s tribute is how well it seemed to fit the person I knew. It shows that Don was genuine and not a different person to different people. I would submit that Don Voss was a good example of a good example, and we are all diminished by his passing.

## References and Notes:

1. Webster’s New Universal Unabridged Dictionary Deluxe. 2nd edition. 1983. Simon and Schuster. New York, NY.
2. Material from Dr. Alan Whittemore used by permission to the author.
3. Meyer, F.G., Mazzeo, P.M., and Voss, D.H. 1994. A catalog of cultivated woody plants of the southeastern United States. United States National Arboretum Contribution Number 7. Washington, D.C.: US National Arboretum, US Department of Agriculture. <http://dx.doi.org/10.5962/bhl.title.63965>

Scanned online at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5962/bhl.title.58811>

Don Hyatt reports that this is a USNA Publication that included the inspection and verification of several thousand specimens from the genus *Rhododendron*.

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# Society News

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## Automating the Convention Plant Sales

*Paul Beck, Treasurer*

The Williamsburg 2016 convention plant sale is the first time the ASA has had a completely automated plant sale. All plants were tagged with a wrap-around plastic tag containing the cultivar name, group, and a description of the plant along with a unique barcode. The convention attendees had barcodes printed on their badges. At the plant sale, both the badge and each plant was scanned. A detailed invoice was then printed, which included the attendee's name, and a list of the plants purchased. This process was so successful that the average checkout time for a customer was well under one minute, including the time for credit card charging. In most cases the checkout line was no more than one or two customers long.

As a result of the phenomenal success, I am offering use of this automation software to those chapters who wish to use the technology. I will provide the following:

- Written instructions for the cashiers.
- Hands-on training for the cashiers the day before the convention.
- A wireless network setup for the plant sale room.
- A laptop to act as the software server.
- Two barcode scanners to borrow for the convention.
- A website (probably the Northern Virginia site) to host the plant data before the convention so attendees can review the plants to be sold.
- Telephone and email consultation before the convention.
- Printing of labels well before the convention.

In order for this to work well, a significant amount of work needs to be done by the hosting chapter in preparation for the convention. The chapter needs to provide the following:

- A single point of contact for me to coordinate the sale automation. This person should be available for initial discussions at least 3-4 months before the convention.
- Payment for barcode tag stock, approximately \$50 per 1000 labels.
- Individuals with good computer skills to enter the plant data into the website, with all data being ready to print barcodes two months before the convention.
- Plant data includes a description and one or more photographs (with publication permission by the photographer). If the plant is already on the Northern Virginia website, this data does not need to be provided.

- Application of all barcode labels to the plants at least one month prior to the convention, so that any shortfalls of labels can be printed in time.
- Excel list of all plants, including pot size and number of each.
- A wireless laptop for each cashier. These need to be provided for setup and configuration at the training session before the convention.
- A Square™, PayPal™ or other appropriate credit card device for each cashier.
- A fast printer (preferably laser) to print invoices. It's best, if possible, to have one for each cashier. I can provide a recommended laser printer for under \$150.

If you are hosting a convention, and wish to avail yourself of this offer, please contact me via email at [pabeck@gmail.com](mailto:pabeck@gmail.com), or by telephone at (703) 860-5676.

## Renewal Time is Approaching

*Paul Beck, Treasurer*

That time of year, when your annual dues need to be paid, is fast approaching. I will be sending out emails in November to all members with an email address on record. Paper mailing of reminders will go out in early December. If you use email, and were not notified last year about your renewal via email, please send me your email address to [azaleas.treasurer@gmail.com](mailto:azaleas.treasurer@gmail.com). If you wish for your email address to not be viewable by other **members** (membership information is not publicly viewable) on our website, please let me know and I will mark it as private. It saves the ASA money for me to take care of the reminder and for you to make the payment electronically. If you choose to not renew electronically, you may use the renewal form on the wrapper of this issue and the winter issue of The Azalean. This application form is also available on the ASA website, at the **Join Us** link.

This year I will also be implementing a subscription service, using the PayPal™ credit card payment service. This will allow you to register your credit card with PayPal, and have your annual membership fees deducted automatically. More details in the winter issue.

## Congratulations to Our 35+ Year Members

*Paul Beck, Treasurer*

I am pleased to recognize the following members who have belonged to the ASA for 35 or more years. Congratulations to these long time members! If I missed your name, please contact me via email ([azaleas.treasurer@gmail.com](mailto:azaleas.treasurer@gmail.com)) or phone (703-860-5676) with the year you joined.

Allan Anderson  
William F. Bedwell

Larry & Flo Brown  
Hugh Caldwell  
Joe H. Coleman  
Vee-Vee Coleman  
R. A. Comunale  
Mr. & Mrs. Donald L. Droneburg  
Dr. & Mrs. Charles H. Evans  
J. Raymond & Ann Goza  
Dianne & James Gregg  
Mr. & Mrs. Warren Groomes  
Belinda Hobbs  
Donald Hyatt  
Philip Louer  
Lawrence & Milbrey Martin  
Dr. Sandra McDonald  
Mr. & Mrs. W. C. Miller III  
Bob & Jay Murray  
David & Leslie Nanney  
Jane Newman  
Julie & T. J. O'Malley  
Ronnie D. & Donna Palmer  
Robert Patterson  
Helen Ann Patton  
Debby Sauer  
Tom & Fran Schuetz  
Robert Stewart  
John T. Thornton  
Jim & Patsy Thornton  
Deborah Van Vechten  
John K. Weagle

Douglas & Susan Harding  
7 Longmeadow Rd  
Lincoln, MA 01773-4809

Peter Iveson  
34 Little Norway Cres  
Toronto, ON M5V 3A3 Canada

Mike Martin  
71 Highway 198  
Carnesville, GA 30521-3000

#### **Cape Fear**

Bonnie Kriha  
11960 Scenic River Dr  
Baxter, MN 56425-8398

#### **Central Carolinas**

Kelly Brickey  
3833 Piaffe Ave  
Mint Hill, NC 28227-0515

Clifford Ray Brock  
179 Northview Dr. Apt 3  
Athens, GA 30605-1465

James Van Horne  
1371 Omie Way  
Lawrenceville, GA 30043-5846

#### **Northern Virginia**

Chuck Croft  
5256 Queens Wood Dr  
Burke, VA 22015-1532

Emmanuel Mangona  
6716 Rolling Road  
Springfield, VA 22152

Jack Rubenstein  
4518 Green Spring Rd  
Alexandria, VA 22312-1425

#### **Texas**

Martha & Gene Hamilton  
155 County Road 084 N  
Jasper, TX 75951-7046

James & Betty Horne  
10 County Road 225  
Brookeland, TX 75931-9703

Rick & Veronica Lewandowski  
4612 White Oak Rd  
Orange, TX 77632-1244

April Smith  
806 Copeland St  
Lufkin, TX 75904-4948

#### **Vaseyi**

David Updike  
1511 Cedar Ln  
Wilkesboro, NC 28697-2616

## **New Members**

### *Paul Beck, Treasurer*

These members joined since May 21, 2016:

Alabamense  
Doug Leonard & Jane Tripp  
1407 Azalea Dr  
Auburn, AL 36830-6820

At Large  
Ray Abraham  
April Cottage Main St  
Ripon, North Yorkshire HG4 3SE United Kingdom

Joanne Cooper  
1334 Wyoming Mill Rd  
Dover, DE 19904-5719

Linda Evanswood  
Fowler Nursery  
259 Murphy Mill Rd  
Americus, GA 31709-5502

David Funderburk  
4419 Huntshire Dr  
Stone Mountain, GA 30083-2459

# Transplanting Native Azaleas

By Charles R. Andrews III—Cumming, Georgia

It has been said that transplanting native azaleas successfully is difficult. The fact is it is probably no more difficult than transplanting most native plants.

I love our native deciduous azaleas which locals sometimes call wild honeysuckle or bush honeysuckle. In 1680 clergyman John Banister sent seed of *Rhododendron viscosum*, the swamp azalea, back from Virginia to Bishop Henry Compton in England. Banister's drawing called the plant "Cistus virginiana flore et odore Periclymeni." In other words (English instead of Latin), "Virginia rock rose with flowers and odor of honeysuckle."<sup>1</sup>

Deciduous azaleas belong to the wonderful family *Ericaceae* (Heath family) and genus *Rhododendron*. The Heath family includes heaths and heathers, magnolias, camellias, blueberries, cranberries, leucothoe, pieris, mountain laurel, and rhododendrons. Botanists will continue to make adjustments in what they think are azalea species. Currently North America is fortunate to have 17 deciduous azaleas species. In fact, all North American native azaleas are deciduous. Eastern Europe has one species and Asia 11. Of the 17 American species, 16 are native to the eastern United States. *R. occidentale*, the western azalea, is only found west of the Rocky Mountains. The southeastern U. S. is the place as far as the lovely wild honeysuckles go. Fourteen species grow and hybridize naturally there. Table I lists deciduous azalea species and their native origins. You can find more about them in Galle's book listed in Reference 1.

Native azaleas bloom from late March into September if you choose your species and hybrids carefully. The blooms range from white, pink, lavender, yellow, orange, red and in between. Some have fragrance. Some do not. You will find the American species in all heights, from 2' to more than 20'. Many have a good fall color. Most are hardy and do well far outside their native range. They combine well with other members of the Heath family, especially the evergreen azaleas. They are relatively free of disease and insect pests. It is a bit of irony that deciduous azaleas are more popular in Europe where they only have one native species than in the United States where all our indigenous species are mostly ignored. Europe and New Zealand are noted for their spectacular deciduous azalea hybrids (e.g., Ghent, Exbury, Knap Hill, and Ilam).

Our native treasures are becoming less and less common in the wild because the wild is being destroyed at a rapid rate. The most efficient way to build a subdivision or shopping center is to destroy everything alive with bulldozers and begin construction on a cleared wasteland. That includes destroying trees hundreds of years old and native azaleas.

If you get an opportunity with the owner's permission to save native plants from destruction, you certainly should do so. The following suggestions may increase your success. If you just want native azaleas for your landscape, nursery-grown plants with well-developed root balls would be the recommended approach. Never dig plants without

permission. The best time to move native azaleas is when they are dormant, without leaves. Of course, when you are saving some from destruction, you may not be able to pick your time. These suggestions are for the typical soil conditions of the southeastern United States where most American species are found. Adjust your technique to your personal conditions.

## Duplicating Native Azalea Habitat

**Acid Soil:** Azaleas are acid-loving plants like most members of the Heath family. They like rich, organic soil with a pH of 4.5 - 6.0. In the clay soils of the Southeast, the pH is usually acidic but not very organic. Use fine pine bark mulch (coin size) in quantity. Some North Georgia specialists believe our soils can be too acidic and actually use some lime occasionally.

**Moisture:** These natives like moisture, but most native azalea species (and all evergreens) perform poorly in soggy soil.<sup>2</sup> This is because they get both oxygen and water from their roots. The feeder roots are normally within the top 4" of the ground, traveling sometimes a dozen feet or more from the base of the plant. They need not too dry, not too wet. Obviously older, well-established plants can take more drought stress than new arrivals. Another reason native azaleas do not like hard clay soil: it is hard to breathe in dry or wet clay. Water your new azaleas regularly during the first two to three years and during periods of drought although the emphasis should be on watering thoroughly and not frequently.

**Sun:** The common advice is to place native azaleas in the shade. In reality, even in the heat of the Mid-South, you will have more flowers with more sun. Except for the late-blooming species (see Table I)<sup>3</sup>, they can take full sun. Very light shade is perhaps best.

**Planting Hole:** A mistake we all have made is to dig a hole too small. Dig a wide hole, 3' or more in diameter, no more than 8" deep. Make sure the edges of the hole are vertical and roughed up to allow roots to easily grow into the surrounding soil. If it is mostly clay, it would not hurt to blend in a dozen shovelfuls of sand. Also blend in 16 to 24 shovelfuls of fine pine bark mulch depending on how clayey it is. This is not a typo. Use 16 to 24 shovelfuls of fine pine bark! Dump on about eight at a time and use your mattock to turn it in. Your well-dug hole will be about 6" to 9" above the surrounding level with plenty of organic material in the soil. In clay soils, you want to plant native azaleas (in fact all *Rhododendron*) above ground level. Put the plant underground no lower than it grew previously. You now have a hole that will absorb water easily but drain well. Don't skimp on the hole. A small hole is a death sentence for your plant.

**Fertilizer:** Fertilizer is not very important but a little will enhance growth. You can fertilize annually in the early spring with a slow release (nine months') fertilizer like Osmocote® or apply an acid-based fertilizer like Super Rainbow® 16-4-8 with micro nutrients twice a year in spring and late summer or very early fall (to help bud growth). We use the latter approach, which is much less expensive than slow release fertilizers.

**Mulch:** Mulch your plants with 3" or 4" of a mulch like pine straw, keeping the mulch away from the base of the plants. Mulching is important. It will help retain moisture and keep the soil friable. Add extra mulch yearly. We replenish the mulch layer after we fertilize in the spring.

## Transplanting Secrets

When transplanting native azaleas from other locations, we suggest you dig your holes before you dig up the established plants. Azalea roots are fragile and

can dry out quickly. As an alternative, you can heel in the dug plants in well-moistened, pure pine bark until time to replant.<sup>3</sup> Here is our proven successful transplanting method, along with techniques for successfully moving a large number of natives.

My mother told me that to get a wild honeysuckle to live when transplanting it you had to keep it in the same north-south orientation as it was originally. I did not believe her then, and I do not believe her now. The secret is pruning, protecting the roots, and pine bark. These three things are all related to the fact that deciduous azaleas grown in the wild do not have good root structure in the best of times, and after we dig them they have almost no roots left.

If you are moving the plants with a truck, you cannot get many plants with 3' pancake-shaped root balls in the truck. We had to transplant or lose forever hundreds of beautiful natives that we had observed and photographed for more than 15 years. Most were *R. flammeum* (Oconee azalea), *R. canescens* (Piedmont azalea), and natural hybrids. Many of these azaleas were large, more than 8' tall and many with 2" diameter stems. We had previously tagged, numbered, and logged the plants in my journal. We filled the bed of the pickup truck two thirds full of fine pine bark and moistened it thoroughly. We also placed a 30-gallon trash can full of water in the back corner of the truck bed and secured the lid.

At the digging site, we moved the wet pine bark toward the tail end of the truck, planning to load the plants first against the cab and then work our way to the rear as we stacked more plants and moved the pine bark forward on top of the root balls.

Each plant before it was dug was severely pruned, to 6" or less from the ground. Do not be afraid to prune them like this. After all, you are about to remove 95% of their feeder roots. Most will die if you do not cut them back to the ground. This is the main secret to success. It also makes it easier to dig if they have been pruned. My neighbor could not bring herself to cut that beautiful orange flame azalea and transplanted it without any pruning. Even with regular watering, the plant

**Table I: Deciduous Azalea Species**  
In Approximate Order of Bloom Time

North American Deciduous Azaleas	Native Origin	European & Asian Deciduous Azaleas	Native Origin
<i>R. austrinum</i> Florida azalea	Northern Florida, southern Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi	<i>R. luteum</i> Pontic azalea	Eastern Europe, Asia Minor
<i>R. canescens</i> Piedmont azalea	North Carolina to Florida to eastern Oklahoma & Texas	<i>R. molle</i> ssp. <i>japonicum</i> Japanese azalea	Japan
<i>R. vaseyi</i> Pinkshell azalea	Western North Carolina (at higher altitudes)	<i>R. molle</i> ssp. <i>molle</i> Chinese azalea	China
<i>R. flammeum</i> ( <i>R. speciosum</i> ) Oconee azalea	Georgia, South Carolina	<i>R. nipponicum</i> Nippon azalea	Japan
<i>R. periclymenoides</i> ( <i>R. nudiflorum</i> ) Pinxterbloom azalea	Massachusetts to Ohio, northern South Carolina to northern Alabama	<i>R. schlippenbachii</i> Royal azalea	Korea, China
<i>R. alabamense</i> Alabama azalea	Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi	<i>R. albrechtii</i> Albrecht's azalea	Japan
<i>R. atlanticum</i> Coastal azalea	Southern New Jersey to Georgia coastal plains	<i>R. pentaphyllum</i> Five-leaf azalea	Japan
<i>R. prinophyllum</i> ( <i>R. roseum</i> ) Roseshell azalea	Southwestern Quebec, New England to western Virginia and Tennessee (at higher altitudes); disjunct populations in Missouri, Arkansas & eastern Oklahoma	<i>R. quinquefolium</i> Cork azalea	Japan
<i>R. calendulaceum</i> Flame azalea	Pennsylvania to Ohio, south to northwestern South Carolina & northern Georgia (at higher altitudes)	<i>R. farrerae</i> Farrer azalea	China
<i>R. canadense</i> Rhodora azalea	Labrador to Quebec, northern New Jersey to northeastern Pennsylvania	<i>R. amagianum</i> (now considered a form of <i>R. weyrichii</i> ) Mt. Amagi azalea	Japan
<i>R. eastmanii</i> May white azalea	South Carolina	<i>R. mariesii</i> Maries azalea	China
<i>R. colemanii</i> Red Hills azalea	Southern Alabama, southwestern Georgia	<i>R. reticulatum</i> Rose azalea	Japan
<i>R. viscosum</i> Swamp azalea	Maine to Ohio, south to Florida, west to eastern Texas	<i>R. weyrichii</i> Weyrich azalea	Korea, Japan
<i>R. occidentale</i> Western azalea	Southwestern Oregon to southern California	<i>R. sanctum</i> (now considered a form of <i>R. weyrichii</i> ) Shrine azalea	Japan
<i>R. arborescens</i> Sweet azalea	New York & Pennsylvania to Kentucky, Tennessee, Georgia & Alabama (at higher altitudes)	<i>R. nudipes</i> Nupide azalea	Japan
<i>R. cumberlandense</i> ( <i>R. bakeri</i> ) Cumberland azalea	Kentucky to western North Carolina, Tennessee to northern Alabama & Georgia (at higher altitudes)		
<i>R. prunifolium</i> Plumleaf azalea	Southeastern Alabama, southwestern Georgia		
<i>R. viscosum</i> var. <i>serrulatum</i> Hammock-sweet azalea	Southern Georgia & Florida west to southeastern Louisiana		

died in two months. It did not have enough roots to support a 7' tall plant full of leaves. If you prune them taller, say 2' to 3', the resultant plant will not look as attractive.

We dug shallow root balls as stated above and immediately took them to the truck. We shook off excess dirt from the roots and swirled them in the trash can of water for 5 to 10 seconds. Then we packed them tightly in the truck with plenty of wet pine bark covering the bare roots.

Using this bare root method, we got more than 60 plants in a small short bed pickup per load. We carried them immediately to the heeling in area where we had beds of pure pine bark 12" deep already prepared. This bark was also well moistened. The bare root plants were quickly moved from the truck to the bark beds, placing them about 3" to 4" deeper than they had been in the ground. We put them deeper in the bark because the top inch or so of the bark dries out. We then placed a soaker hose on top and with regular watering kept the bark moist for the rest of the year. We were interested in getting a new root system quickly developed, and pure pine bark will do the trick. Pure pine bark is an excellent medium for native azaleas. It will stay moist but readily allows oxygen to get to the roots.

During the year in the pine bark beds they, with the help of slow release fertilizer, put on 12" to 24" of new growth with healthy stems. Almost all developed flower buds in the first fall. Some plants had new stems with 4 or 5 flower buds on their tips. Just one year after digging them and pruning them back to the ground, we had ball-trusses of 25 to 35 flowers since each bud contains 5 to 7 flower blossoms.

While we waited a year to move the plants from the heeling in beds to permanent places in the landscape in order to regrow a good root structure, you can move them directly if you move them in late fall or early spring and if the holes are well prepared. Just make certain that throughout the transplanting process the few remaining roots are protected and stay moist. Fine feeder roots will dry out in minutes. We would definitely recommend the raised pine bark beds for the rest of the year (or longer) if you have to dig during the summer. (See "A Useful Raised Bed" on p. 66-67.)

In addition to the excellent information in Galle's book and booklet and in Bir's book, you can find valuable information on deciduous azaleas in other references.<sup>3,4,5,6,7</sup>

## Summary

- ▶ Prune transplants back to within 6" of the ground.
- ▶ Dig a 3' pancake-shaped root ball.
- ▶ Keep roots moist and protected at all times while transplanting.
- ▶ Heel plants in with well-moistened pine bark if necessary.
- ▶ Move them to a wide, well-prepared hole.
- ▶ Plant slightly above ground.
- ▶ Water regularly for the first two years and during periods of drought.

## References and Notes

1. Galle, Fred C. 1987. Azaleas. Timber Press. P. 65. This is the definitive book on azaleas, evergreen and deciduous.
2. Bir, Richard E. 1992. Growing & Propagating Showy Native Woody Plants. University of North Carolina Press. P. 134. Richard Bir identifies *R. vaseyi* (pinkshell), *R. arborescens* (sweet), *R. atlanticum* (coastal), and *R. viscosum* (swamp) azaleas as thriving in damp soils. Ron Miller reports *R. viscosum* var. *serrulatum* thrives along the Gulf Coast, often inundated with salt water for long periods of time.
3. Plant Info and subsequent pages [Internet] Azalea Chapter ARS. Available from <<http://www.azaleachapter.com/index.php/plant-info>>
4. Foote, Leonard E. and Jones, Samuel B. 1989. Native Shrubs and Vines of the Southeast: Landscaping Uses and Identification. Timber Press. Pp. 104-108.
5. Galle, Fred C. 1974. Southern Living Azaleas. Oxmoor House. Pp. 63-73.
6. Ottensen, Carole. 1995. The Native Plant Primer. Harmony Books. Pp. 277-286.
7. Wasowski, Sally. 1994. Gardening With Native Plants of the South. Taylor Publishing Co. Pp. 84-85.

Charles Andrews is a retired engineer, whose life-long hobby of trout fishing in the mountains of Georgia introduced him many years ago to American azaleas, a subject about which he wants to learn everything possible. Charles is currently working on two books about native azaleas: one on historic illustrations from 1690 to the present and another on the history and characteristics of our American azaleas.

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# Chapter News

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Also check the ASA website for further information and photos of activities. Most chapters have hot-links to their chapter names under the [About Us](#) page.

## Alabamense

*Patrick Thompson—President*

The chapter has been sowing seeds to rejuvenate previous rejuvenation efforts. A seed swap is being planned for a fall meeting, and Auburn University's Donald E. Davis Arboretum's new curator Morgan Beadles is very interested in the ASA and azaleas.

## Ben Morrison

*Harold Belcher, Secretary*

The chapter has been busy since it was regrouped by president Budne Reinke and others this past June. Other officers are: Rosa McWhorter, vice president; Harold Belcher, secretary; Dale Flowers, treasurer; and "Azalea Alert" newsletter editor Harold Belcher. September 7th was the members' luncheon and plant exchange to which NVA Chapter members were invited, and Ben Morrison members were invited to share NVA Chapter's September 17th azalea and daylily auction and sale in Springfield, VA. The event was a joint venture between NVA-ASA and the Northern Virginia Daylily Society and included both a silent auction and live azalea auction of special plants!

## Lake Michigan

*John Migas, President*

Since hosting the 2011 National Convention held in Evansville, IN, we have not had much activity to report. As of this summer the Lake Michigan Chapter has been in the rebuilding stages. Many key members who were very active, always volunteering, and seemed to always be present at meetings and events have either moved out of town or just simply gone MIA. In the future our present members hope to rebound from the chapter's silence over the past few years. Recent participation has been at it's all time low, but we will continue to build.

## Northern VA

*Barry Sperling, Corresponding Secretary*

The national convention was a highlight of the year and our chapter was one of the sponsors, with a large number of members volunteering some (or a lot of) time to allow it to run smoothly.

While the rains effectively washed out potential garden tours in late April and early May, the annual Greenspring plant sale eluded the raindrops, helping to fund the newsletter and donations to worthy causes. The regular July cutting exchange was joined by members from the Ben Morrison Chapter and, as usual, Joe Coleman came up from Georgia to visit and further his collection. Carolyn Beck held a detailed class in handling and planting cuttings

after the exchange. Barb Kirkwood came up with a brilliant idea and created a book of pictures, donated by attendees, of 2016 convention highlights. This was presented to the two chairs, Rick Bauer and Don Hyatt, in appreciation for their work, spanning years, in making the convention one of the best ever.

Looking ahead to September, the annual auction and plant sale September 17th also involved sales from the Daylily Society and should be well attended. Once again Paul Beck's computer expertise will allow barcode reading of the plants for fast sales and credit card purchases. On October 23 Dr. Paulette Royt will give a talk on "Life in the Soil", discussing the myriad plants and animals that contribute to the success of larger plants, such as azaleas. After such a taxing year the holiday social on December 4th will be a relaxing way to end our activities and look forward to a fine 2017.

Ending this record on a down note, last summer saw the passing of Don Voss, an active member and lecturer who contributed his time, editing, and organizational skills to both the ARS and ASA. He also will be missed at the US National Arboretum where his work with the plant collection was invaluable. We all are thankful for your dedication, Don!

## Rev. John Drayton

*Miles Beach, ASA Director*

As most of you know the heat and lack of rain through most of the summer caused a significant drop in rooting azalea cuttings in our mist house. The mist house controller stopped working and many of our azalea cuttings died as a result. We still had our summer meeting with soup and salad for our meal. It was wonderful that no one brought soup due to the hot weather, but we did have an abundance of wonderful salads. Those who had rooted cuttings that managed to survive were able to pot them up and take them home for more personal care. We discussed taking seeds from the evergreen azaleas, which would take place at our first fall meeting, so our members can learn how to identify seed pods and how to have a successful take rate. All in all, the meeting was very successful but with less than normal attendance due to the heat.

## Texas

*Sherrie Randall, Secretary*

Our fall meeting will be held September 24 at member Robert Thau's nursery in Jasper, Texas. Our business meeting will include election of officers for 2017, discussion of upcoming events, future meeting sites, and members' new business suggestions. Robert joined the ASA for the Williamsburg convention and brought back many plants. His nursery, Nature's Way, has over 300 azaleas and 100 Japanese maples laid out in meticulously maintained beds. He is a prolific propagator and will give us a hands-on demonstration.



▲ Vaseyi group visiting Biltmore Gardens (left to right): Audrey Stelloh, Susan Guest, Suzanne Medd, Wes Burlingame, Jerry Neff, Juanita Lambert, Larason Lambert, Andy Whipple.

## Vaseyi

### *Audrey Stelloh, President*

Vaseyi Chapter had two field trips in April and one in May. The first was to East Fork Nursery in Sevierville, TN, where the fabulous plantswoman Vivian Abney raises a huge selection of deciduous azaleas. Many of the azaleas are propagated by tissue culture by Vivian. She also sells conifers, camellias and other shrubs. Thirteen happy members came away with carloads of plants.

The second trip was to see the beautiful collection of prize winning deciduous azaleas in Ray Head's garden in Rutherfordton, NC. The mature blooming azaleas were awe-inspiring. Ray has many years of experience and expertise with raising azaleas and was happy to share his plants and growing tips with all of the attendees. We also went to Plants-A-Plenty Nursery in Forest City, NC, owned by Wayne Hutchins. He has a mature display garden with many native azaleas, ferns, and rhododendrons. Many plants were available for purchase.

The May field trip was organized by the native azalea expert Wes Burlingame. Wes contacted Vaseyi member Parker Andes, the director of horticulture at Biltmore House, and Clara Curtis, director of horticulture at the

North Carolina Arboretum in Asheville. Biltmore gardens had large sweeps of blooming deciduous azaleas. We also enjoyed seeing the old growth trees such as *Metasequoia glyptostroboides* (Dawn Redwood). The azalea repository at the NC Arboretum in Asheville contains an example of all the North American native azaleas except *R. occidentale*. The twelve of us saw lots of beautiful flowers and got some design ideas. Officer elections will be held in November.

# A Useful Raised Bed

By Charles R. Andrews III—Cumming, Georgia

One of the best things I ever did relative to our garden is to build several raised beds. These beds serve many uses. Primarily, I use them to hold over plants with weak root systems. They also serve as small vegetable gardens.

There are times when I end up with plants that are not very healthy. The roots may be badly pot-bound, the most recent growth may be spindly, or the plants may just be small and immature. Instead of immediately placing them somewhere in the garden where they may not get needed attention, I take them to my raised bed, filled only with fine pine bark mulch. Here the plants reside for a year under drip irrigation and a little fertilizer, developing a vigorous root system. In one year's time, it is incredible how roots grow in the moist, well-drained pine bark environment. The following fall, with a pitchfork, I lift any rejuvenated plant out of its pine bark bed and plant it in its permanent home, a large hole, well mixed with fine pine bark.

This also works for mature plants that have been dug and have lost most of their roots in the process. Holding such plants over for a year in the raised bed makes them much healthier plants.

When not temporarily holding landscape plants, the beds are great places to grow tomatoes, lettuce, bok choy, garlic, and other tasty vegetables.

The beds are simple but attractive. The sides are treated 2" x 12" boards, with 2" x 4" studs bracing them every



Photo Charles Andrews

▲ Hurricane Creek native azaleas in raised bed.



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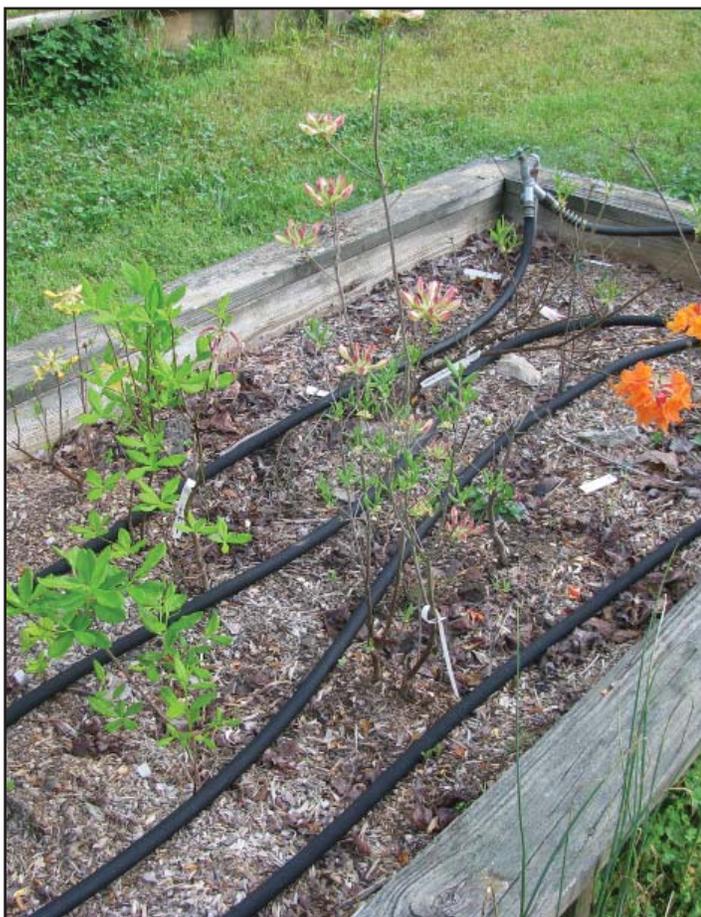


Photo Charles Andrews

▲ Watering is essential. Shown here hose and connection with native azalea seedlings.

▼ “New style” raised bed with watering system and native azalea seedlings, but without wasps.



Photo Charles Andrews

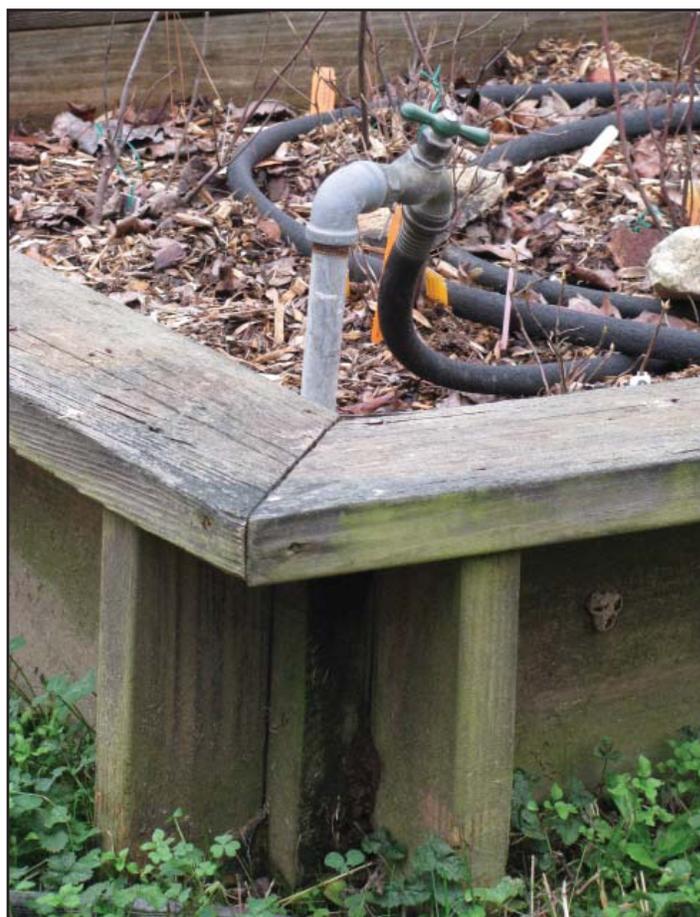


Photo Charles Andrews

▲ Detail of watering connection in raised bed.

2' to 3' along the outside. The 2x4 braces are 14" in length, about 2" longer than the height of the side boards. The extra 2" go into the ground and hold the bed frame in place. On the top edge of the boards and covering the supporting 2x4s, I placed 2" x 6" boards horizontally around the frame. This makes a comfortable seat to sit on while working in the bed. The width and length can be anything to fit the situation. My beds are 4' wide, allowing easy access to the center of the bed from either side. As mentioned earlier, the beds are then filled with pure pine bark mulch, the small stuff, dime-sized and smaller. Access to water is essential, and a soaker hose is the main accessory.

A modification I made with my second set of raised beds is to place the vertical 2x4 supports on the inside of the 2" x 12" frame and then cover the inside supports with a 1" x 6" skirt. The reason: wasps. I found wasps would build nests under the seat. Allowing no area under the seat for wasps to build nests has made my life much happier.

Add a raised bed to your garden. You will be glad you did.

Charles Andrews is a member of the Vaseyi Chapter of the Azalea Society of America, a member of the editorial review committee for *The Azalean*, and president of the Azalea Chapter of the American Rhododendron Society.

# Azaleas 2017 – Down on the Bayou

## Thursday March 30 – Saturday April 1, 2017

### Hammond, Louisiana

By Allen Owings—Hammond, Louisiana

The Louisiana Chapter of the Azalea Society of America is looking forward to hosting the national convention in 2017 – “Down On the Bayou.” We will be headquartered in Hammond, LA – the Heart of Louisiana’s Florida Parishes. Hammond is located one hour east of Baton Rouge and one hour north of New Orleans. Peak azalea bloom in the Florida Parishes area is typically late March. Early blooms can begin in mid-February and there is typically azalea flower color through early May before transition begins to the summer- and fall-flowering repeat bloomers.

We will have a great time in the area with tours to historical St. Francisville, stops at local nurseries and several evenings for garden touring, plant buying, plus dining and socializing at the LSU AgCenter Hammond Research Station, home to the Margie Jenkins Azalea Garden.



Photo Allen Owings

▲ Margie Jenkins Azalea Garden at LSU AgCenter, Hammond, Louisiana.

▼ Mr. Imahara shown at Imahara's Botanical Garden.

### A Few Tour Visits

**Imahara's Botanical Garden** in St. Francisville is a privately owned garden developed and maintained by Baton Rouge area horticulture legend Walter Imahara. In 2003, Imahara purchased 55 acres along the backwash banks of the Mississippi River, located one mile from the historic town. He had a dream to plant a beautiful garden much like the one where he spent his childhood years, the historic Afton Villa Gardens. Azaleas, majestic live oaks, magnolias, and reflecting ponds became the images from which a “legacy garden” would be built, a gift from him and his wife to be enjoyed by all. For more information, visit: <http://imaharasbotanicalgarden.blogspot.com/>

We will also journey to the home and grounds at the historical Rosedown Plantation for a tour led by horticulturist Trish Aleshire. Now part of the



Photo Imahara Botanical Garden



Photo: Allen Owings

▲ Margie Jenkins Azalea Garden at LSU AgCenter, Hammond, Louisiana.

Louisiana State Parks, staff and volunteers work to conserve and maintain the site, conducting tours and programs to illustrate plantation life in the 1800s. In 2005, Rosedown Plantation was placed on the National Park Service List of Historic Landmarks. The gardens were the province of Martha Turnbull throughout her life. The Turnbulls' honeymoon in Europe included great formal gardens of France and Italy, an influence seen in Martha's activities at Rosedown. The gardens grew out from the house over a span of many decades, to cover approximately 28 acres. In the 19th century, Rosedown was one of the few privately maintained formal gardens in the United States. For more information, visit: [www.crt.state.la.us/louisiana-state-parks/historic-sites/rosedown-plantation-state-historic-site/index](http://www.crt.state.la.us/louisiana-state-parks/historic-sites/rosedown-plantation-state-historic-site/index).

## Nursery Stops

We have been to **Transcend Nursery**, home of Buddy and Dixie Lee, during previous ASA national conventions in Louisiana. Join us again for their Southern hospitality and get to see Buddy's current breeding and plant development efforts. Also, for the first time, the ASA group will venture

to Buddy's new arboretum a few miles up the road. See heat- and disease-tolerant *Rhododendron* studies, new breeding efforts with Louisiana's native shrubs, and more. Also hear Dr. John Thornton share his 45 years of *Rhododendron* breeding knowledge.

Lunchtime on Friday will be spent at Bracy's Nursery ([www.bracys.com](http://www.bracys.com)) and the beautiful home and outdoor living area of hosts Randy and Regina Bracy. **Bracy's Nursery** started in mid-1980s and is now one of the largest wholesale production nurseries in Louisiana. We will get to enjoy both food and plants.

A stop at the home of legendary nurserywoman **Margie Jenkins** will conclude the afternoon of nursery visits. Margie will highlight some of her favorite plants and favorite azaleas in a "show and tell" presentation. This is not to be missed. Here we will have a dessert buffet. (Keep in mind – in Louisiana, we eat at every stop, so please pace yourself!)

## Speakers

**Dr. Neil Odenwald**, fellow of the American Society of Landscape Architects and former director of the LSU School



▲ The majority of the sun garden plant trial area at the LSU AgCenter in Hammond was submerged under 2' of floodwaters from the Tangipahoa River August 14-15, 2016.

of Landscape Architecture, will share with all of us his love of historical Louisiana gardens, gardeners, landscaping, and design.

Plant pathologist **Dr. Mark Windham** from the University of Tennessee and **Dr. Rodrigo Valverde** from the LSU AgCenter will provide presentations. Dr. Windham will present “Growing Better Azaleas” and Dr. Valverde will discuss “Virus Identification in Azaleas.”

## Entertainment

Our dinner entertainment on Saturday evening will be an encore presentation by **David Himelrick**, horticulture professor at LSU AgCenter. He will perform “**Illusions of the Mind.**” What our brain “sees” is influenced by our past experiences, imagination, and associations. He will keep you guessing as he uses the power of imagination to draw an image that exists only in someone’s mind!

Complete registration information and finalized details will be forthcoming in the next issue of *The Azalean*. In the meantime, please contact convention organizer Allen Owings at [aowings@agcenter.lsu.edu](mailto:aowings@agcenter.lsu.edu) or call 225/603-8096 (cell), 985/543-4125 (office). Email communication is preferred.

## Convention Updates

### South Louisiana—ASA 2017 Host State— Receives Record Rainfall, Flooding

August 13-15, 2016, was a trying three days in south Louisiana. From Hammond, LA westward to the Cajun Country of Lafayette, most of the area received rainfall amounts ranging from 8” to 32”. Record flooding was experienced over a 20-parish region of Louisiana. But all is good! The ASA national convention is still scheduled for spring 2017! We looking forward to seeing everyone.

### More Good News from the 2016 Convention!

ASA treasurer Paul Beck notified us that the 2016 Williamsburg convention was so successful that the organizers have voted to give \$5,000 each to the ASA and the ARS. This donation will help with expenses in the coming years. Thank you, convention organizers!

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