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# The Glenn Dale Azaleas

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By B. Y. Morrison

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The Glenn Dale azaleas were bred for a specific purpose, namely, the production of a garden race of azaleas that should be large-flowered and cold-hardy for the general Washington, D.C., area and other regions of similar climates, in order to parallel the effects that can be had farther south from the azaleas commonly known as the "Southern indicas."

There was no thought then, and there is no thought now, of urging them for wider use, even if there is some evidence that in the hands of skilled growers they are promising plants for the Atlantic Coast climates as far north as Long Island Sound and in the San Francisco Bay Region. Their behavior as yet in the Pacific Northwest seems satisfactory but not ideal and from limited trials in the Deep South it would appear that probably not more than half will be useful for lack of a brief and continuous cold period.

The procedures were the most simple, namely the mating of hardy varieties of species with plants of doubtful hardiness or known tenderness. The seedlings were grown with care, under glass until their second summer when they are established in well prepared nursery beds in a thin oak wood. Every attention was given to assure establishment before winter. From then on no care was given to insure survival either for winter or summer.

As was to be expected there were definite losses the first winter, some combinations being almost 90 per cent tender. As was also to be expected some combinations gave uniformly poor results. No choices were made until the plants were about five years old so some consideration could be given to bush habit as well as flower quality. Cuttings were made of all the chosen clones and grown on for further study so that the final choices represent two critical examinations. Acres of these azaleas have now been planted in the National Arboretum.

Although flowering seasons were considered in the original matings, several groups of crosses produced plants that did not meet the requirements in flower size but filled in several blooming periods in which we had no azaleas bloom from the standard commercial varieties. These have been kept and introduced.

Such varieties as Dayspring often bloom here in mild seasons in late March and there is a considerable range of color in varieties that are contemporary with Kaempferi but outside of its color range, in both single and hose-in-hose types. Another group, of which Fashion will serve as an example, repeats although in a somewhat limited color range as yet the effect produced by the standard Kurumes, just as these have finished. Treasure, Sheila, Dream, Loveliness, Youth and so on bloom with old "indica alba" in all the desired tonalities from tinted white to deep rose, and are supplemented by the large flowered varieties that range from apricot yellow in Ambrosia through tinted reds and rose colors all

underlaid with yellow as in such plants as Minstrel and Troubadour. Clarion is almost pure Chinese red; Grandee one tone darker and so on.

## Azaleas in May

Early May finds the long series that range from palest pink in plants like Aphrodite and Revery through tonalities to the darker Megan and Fakir, with a few pink-tinted orange varieties like Mary Margaret and Phoebe to pure reds such as Copperman, Picador and F. C. Bradford. At the same time one has the exquisite icy white Glacier.

Picking up this series and continuing to the end of May with some overlapping into June comes the series that has, perhaps, the greatest pleasure for us here, since it combines almost everything that had been planned for, quality, size of flower and wide range of color and pattern. Choice is almost impossible but for pure whites Arctic, Damask, Angela Place, Helen Close, Silver Lace will do for a beginning; for pinks, Crinoline and Helen Gunning with a white eye; Louise Dowdle, Lillie Maude and Janet Noyes for rose to rose-red and Dowager a little deeper.

Striped varieties can be had in a wide range with one series that starts at pale Phlox Purple and darkens to pure magenta, another with eosin pinks through lacquer reds to almost pure vermilion. Prosperity in pure white with a clear lavender margin and Martha Hitchcock with a similar margin but of clear rich amaranth lead on well to the true purples of Litany and Muscadine.

No mention has been made of the warm mahogany reds of early flowering Carmel or mid-season Burgundy, both giving a color new in hardy azaleas and valuable for accent. Nor has anything been said of the very low-growing forms such as Epicure, pure rose-pink; Rose Ash, dull orange

washed with rose; Daphnis, similar but a trifle more lavender; Eros, paler than Rose Ash but not as pink as Epicure. Stunner and Aztec will come here when available, the first white with rosy orange margins, the latter white with almost pure orange margins.

Doubles have not been sought especially, but Delos, Andros, Kenwood and Rosette are all worthy of

garden attention and when the plants are large enough furnish cut sprays of bloom that rival roses in charm.

All the parent plants belong in the Obtusum subseries of azaleas, which are relatively evergreen. The Glenn Dale azaleas bred from them show the same range of evergreenness, with some shedding their leaves almost as much as does Kaempferi here and others as persistent as old "ma-

crantha." The leaves vary in character as would be expected from large thin leaves through somewhat woolly leaves like those of "indica alba," glossy leaves like the Kurumes, to narrow glossy leaves as in "macrantha." Many varieties show autumn color in the leaves about to fall and many more show various hues of bronze and purple through the entire winter. □

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## Azalea News

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### Children's Gardening Symposium

The American Horticultural Society in collaboration with the American Horticultural Therapy Association, Brooklyn Botanic Garden, National Gardening Association, and The New York Botanical Garden, is sponsoring a national symposium to serve as a catalyst to help create more educational gardening programs for all children in grades pre-kindergarten through grade 8. It will take place August 12-14, 1993, in Washington, D.C.

The symposium, entitled "Children, Plants, and Gardens: Educational Opportunities", will present ideas and hands-on methods to create dynamic gardening programs at schools, public gardens and community youth programs.

A full schedule of nationally renowned keynote speakers, hands-on workshops, panel discussions, tours of youth gardens, educational and commercial exhibits, and social events will be featured.

Topics at the symposium will include: Interdisciplinary Education Through Gardening, Science and Environmental Education Through Gardening, Art and Design Ideas for a

Children's Garden, How to Create Dynamic School Garden Programs, How to Obtain Horticultural Training and Donations, and Horticultural Therapy for Children with Special Needs.

For more information or to receive a registration brochure, call, write or fax:

**Children's Symposium**  
**American Horticultural Society**  
**7931 East Boulevard Drive**  
**Alexandria, VA 22308**

**PHONE: (800) 777-7931**

**FAX: (703) 764-6032** □

### Reprint of Photograph

By request, we are reprinting a photograph that appeared in the March 1993 issue of **THE AZALEAN** in a larger size. Dr. Jim Shanks, the developer of the newly announced Princess Azaleas is on the left. Also shown from left to right are Andy Adams, Barbara Bullock and Dick West. □

