

A Family Reunion — Joint ARS / ASA 2002

Convention Preview

Roger Duvall — Atlanta, Georgia

Broadleaf evergreens have long been among the most popular plants in southern gardens. Magnolia, camellia, gardenia, and azalea all conjure up romantic images of the landscape and history of the South; rhododendron and mountain laurel are the best-loved native plants of the southern Appalachian Mountains. All can be grown in and around Atlanta. South Georgia summers are too warm for broadleaf hybrid rhododendrons; winters north of Atlanta are too cold for many hybrid azaleas, but Atlanta is happily located where gardeners can and do grow all of the broadleaf evergreens.

According to an aphorism making its way around gardening circles, "If you want your garden to *look* Southern, plant evergreen azaleas, but if you want it to *be* Southern, plant native azaleas." The 2002 convention will focus special attention on the 13 species of deciduous azaleas native to Georgia. Though they have not yet become as popular as the broadleaf evergreens in our gardens, they are not the rarity that they once were. In many of the gardens on our tours, they are, in fact, the featured plant.

The headquarters of the Convention is the Atlanta Marriott, Century Center. The Marriott is a full-service hotel with an outdoor swimming pool, health club, coffee shop, and restaurant serving breakfast, lunch, and dinner. A shuttle from the Atlanta airport is available. From the Marriott, it is seven miles to the Atlanta Botanical Gardens, six miles to the Atlanta History Museum (where the Azalea Chapter, ARS, maintains a chapter garden), and three miles to Lenox Mall, recently voted Atlanta's "Best Mall," and Phipps Plaza.

The convention is sponsored jointly by the Azalea Chapter of the American Rhododendron Society and the Oconee Chapter of the Azalea Society

of America. Many gardeners are members of both organizations. The Azalea Chapter was chartered in 1968, under the guidance of Ralph Pennington, a local hybridizer and nurseryman. The Oconee Chapter of the ASA received its charter in 1991. Jim Thornton, past president of the ASA, was also the first president of the Oconee Chapter.

Speakers—The speakers lined up for the convention represent a wealth of knowledge and talent. Convention goers can become native azalea experts if they choose to attend all the lectures concerning the natives, but the convention schedule offers a variety of expertise and subjects for those with a broader scope. Selecting from lectures on hybrid rhododendrons, evergreen azaleas, kalmia, and companion plants will make for some difficult decisions. There will also be practical advice on landscape design, pest control, and how computers can help us in the garden. Our speakers are academics, landscape designers, authors, nursery managers, hybridizers, and amateur horticulturists. Many of them are also the people who keep our gardening societies going. All of them are practical gardeners just like the rest of us. We feel certain that attendees will go away loaded with new ideas and eager to apply them in their own gardens.

Tours—The joint ARS/ASA convention in 2002 offers everyone the opportunity to visit a wealth of Georgia's private and public gardens in and around Metro Atlanta, Athens, Callaway Gardens in Pine Mountain, and in Auburn, Alabama. Each garden has its own unique story behind its conception and development. Over 21 gardens are featured in six different tour packages, spread over four days:

Tour A: Thursday, April 18, 2002: Athens Tour—Picadilly Farm, a

wholesale nursery, and the Giberson, Lambert, Yeatts, and Dooley gardens.

Tour B: Thursday, April 18, 2002: N. Atlanta Private Garden Tour—Sommerville, Ligon, Caras, Jones, and Gilbert gardens.

Tour C: Friday, April 19, 2002: Hiawasse/Helen Tour—Scenic tour of the North Georgia Mountains, a shopping tour of antiques and craft shops in the Alpine/Bavarian village of Helen, and the Hamilton garden.

Tour D: Saturday, April 20, 2002: Opelika/Auburn Tour—Very special private collections of wildflowers, evergreen rhododendrons, deciduous azaleas, and camellias at the Dean, Speake, Greenleaf, Corley, and Robinson gardens.

Tour E: Saturday, April 20, 2002: S. Atlanta Tour—Three large gardens with numerous mature specimens of rhododendrons and azaleas at the Coleman, Sams, and Reid gardens.

Tour F: Sunday, April 21, 2002: Callaway Gardens—Your chance to have a private tour of the primarily hybrid azaleas in the new 40-acre Brothers Azalea Bowl and the Mirror Pond garden that Fred Galle planted during the development of the gardens.

To whet your appetite, the wonders of both the Coleman and Sommerville gardens are described in pages 80 and 82 in this issue.

Special Convention Events

Plant Sale—Around 5,000 plants will be offered at the plant sale, which promises to be one of the highlights of the convention. All of the Georgia native azaleas should be available, including seedlings from locations famous for their hybrid swarms. Named hybrids will also be for sale, including

a good selection of those developed by Dr. Aromi. A large group of outstanding evergreen azaleas will be included, and for those who are interested in evergreen rhododendron species, the sale will include *Rhododendron maximum* 'Red Max,' standard *R. chapmanii*, Gene Cline's dwarf *R. chapmanii*, and a ball-truss form of *R. minus*. Many of the plants will be in three- to four-inch pots for easy transport and so that conventioners can assemble a good collection. Payment must be by check or cash; unfortunately, we cannot accept credit cards.

Mini Trade Fair—Nurserymen, landscapers, and others who would like to advertise their goods and services at the convention are being invited to participate in a mini trade fair. We will supply tables and chairs; participants can bring catalogues, brochures, etc. to promote their business. There is no fee, but participants must be registered for the convention. We believe that this will be an excellent way for horticultural businessmen, particularly those who do business by catalogue or the Internet, to make contact with their customers.

Flower show—The flower show will be a judged competition with categories for all varieties of rhododendron and azaleas, both evergreen and deciduous. We believe that guests from

other parts of the country will be surprised at the variety that can be successfully grown here.

Plant auction—The auction, to be conducted by Maarten van der Giessen, should be a lively affair. The plants will include many prize one-of-a-kind deciduous azaleas.

Bonsai demonstration—The president of the Azalea Chapter ARS, Hubert Jones, is also a devotee of the art of bonsai. Hubert's is one of two outstanding bonsai collections included in the North Georgia tour. To see how it is done, plan to attend his demonstration.

Photography show—A judged photography show is currently in the planning stages.

Hybridizers' roundtable—Anyone who is especially interested in or curious about producing worthwhile hybrids should plan to attend the hybridizers' roundtable, which will be moderated by Fred Minch. The Atlanta roundtable should be an especially good one for new ideas, since we are sure to get cross-fertilization from the two national organizations.

Propagation roundtable—The propagation roundtable promotes the best practices and encourages innovation. Anyone who has too many single-

ton plants should attend and get inspired to propagate. This year's moderator will be Ed Collins.

Want to Know More?

More information about our speakers and a great many additional garden illustrations can be found in the convention website at arsazalea.tripod.com. We believe that you will leave Atlanta envious of our spectacular spring display and we will do our best to live up to our reputation for hospitality.

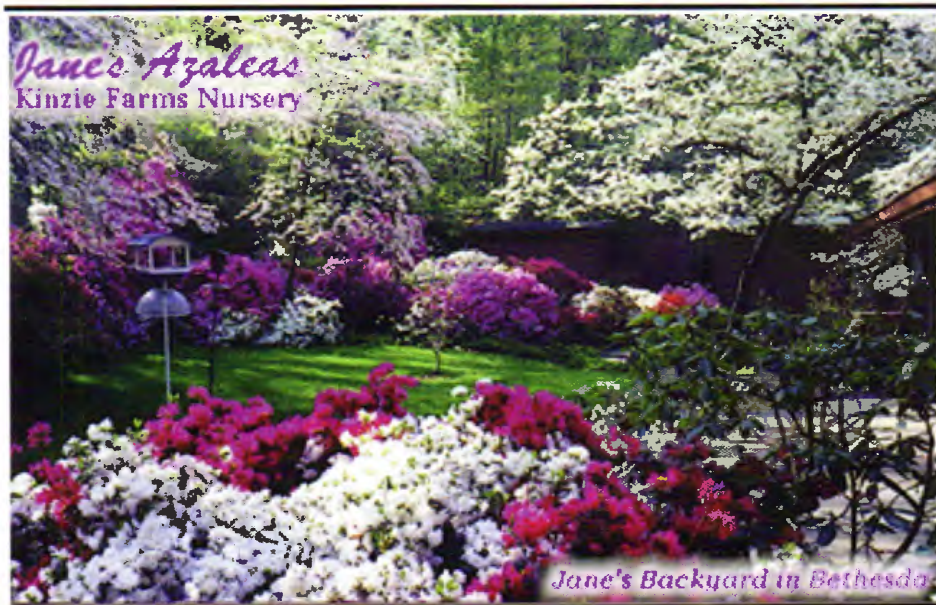
Register Now

Make your plans to attend this joint convention today. Study the enclosed insert and decide which tours you want to attend. Then, fill out the registration form included as an insert in this issue. Make your registration fee check payable to "Azalea Chapter Convention Account" and mail both the check and the registration form to:

Edith Davis
132 Garden Lane
Decatur, GA 30030

See you in Atlanta!

Roger Duvall has been a member of the Azalea Chapter of the ARS since 1988. He is webmaster for the Azalea Chapter home page on the Internet and maintains the Convention web page, as well.



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