

# *A Capital Adventure — Joint ASA/ARS Convention*

May 12–15, 2006

Join us in May of 2006 for a “Capital Adventure.” Hosted in Rockville, Maryland, a nearby suburb of Washington, DC, this will be the joint annual meeting for both the Azalea Society of America and the American Rhododendron Society. Help us reflect on our past achievements and look forward to exciting new directions and opportunities for the future.

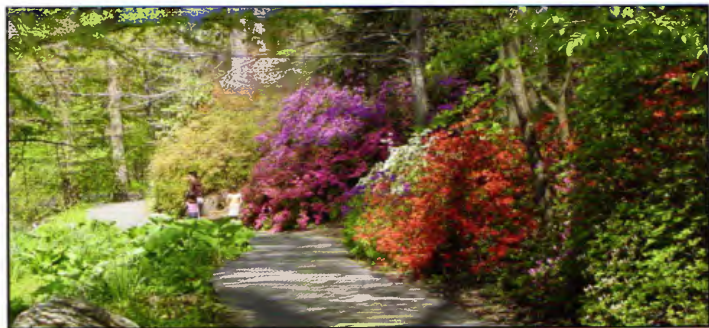


Photo 1. Azalea Trail at Brookside Gardens.  
(Photo by William C. Miller III.)

Please note a slight shift in sequence for traditional staging of this convention. We will open the program on Friday evening, May 12, and close Monday morning, May 15, 2006. By spanning the weekend, we were able to secure significant savings on room costs while avoiding rush-hour traffic complexities in our Nation's Capital.

## **Hotel and Conference Facility**

Our convention will be headquartered at the DoubleTree-Rockville Hotel, a first-rate facility with direct access to the Red Line of the Washington Metro Subway. The hotel is conveniently located in the northwest suburbs of Washington, DC, with easy access from the Capital Beltway (I-495) and Interstate I-270. There is complimentary underground parking for hotel guests.

Three major airports serve the greater Washington area including BWI in Baltimore, Maryland; Reagan National in Alexandria, Virginia; and Dulles International in Chantilly, Virginia. Shuttle and taxi service is available, and airports provide connections to the Metro. Both the MARC train and Amtrak serve Rockville.

## **Garden Tours**

The primary garden tours are scheduled for Saturday and Sunday. On Saturday, we offer a choice of two tours, and on Sunday there is only one option. We have also planned an overnight trip into the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia after the convention.

Attendees or family members may also decide to extend their stay on either side of the convention to see some of the historic sights in Washington, DC. Most of the monuments and points of interest are easily reached from the Metro.

## **Saturday Tour A – Private Gardens / Brookside Gardens**

Most of the gardens on this tour are nearby, so little time is wasted in transit. A major attraction will be **Brookside Gardens**, a 54-acre worldclass public garden developed and operated by the Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission. The landscape includes both formal and informal areas with intimate garden rooms defined by walls, hedges, shrubs, and trees (Photo 1). Major features include multiple formal gardens, a 5-acre azalea garden, an aquatic garden, the Japanese Teahouse, two conservatories, and a new visitors' center.

There are five private gardens on this tour, most of which are gardens of our ASA hosts in the Brookside Gardens Chapter. The 1-acre garden of **Barry and Nancy Bosworth**, with its winding paths, small waterfall, and fishpond, has approximately 75 azaleas interspersed with various perennials and wildflowers. The second garden, the wooded landscape of **Dianne and James Gregg**, showcases azalea plantings that bloom over a long period of time and represents many hybrid families as well as native deciduous azaleas. **Jane and Bob Kinzie's** garden is a 1-1/2-acre property resembling a park, with a pond as the centerpiece and hundreds of azaleas and specimen

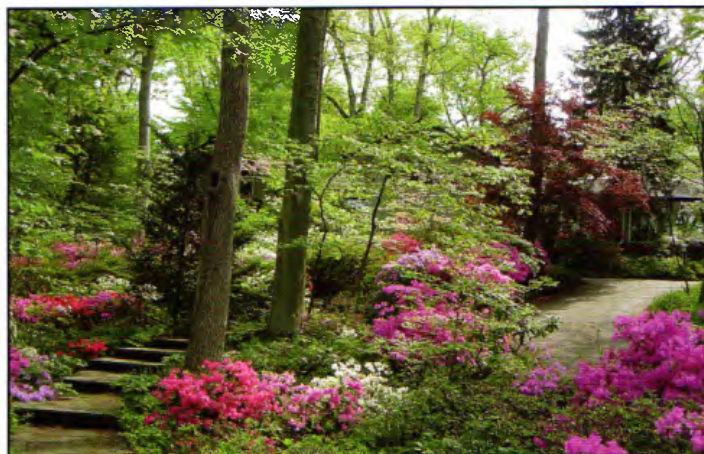


Photo 2. Garden path in the Kinzie garden.  
(Photo by Jane Kinzie.)



plantings along the winding gravel paths under a canopy of mature trees and shrubs (Photo 2). Surrounding the home of **Janet and Bill Miller's** shaded 1/2-acre property are hundreds of mature evergreen and deciduous azaleas representing most of the major hybrid groups, both old and new (Photo 3). Bill is co-chair of the 2006 Convention. **Glenn and Nancy Thompson's** 1-1/2-acre diverse landscape has paths leading to individual gardens filled with azaleas and many other plants, all protected by an 8' iron fence to keep out the deer.



Photo 3. *Rhododendron austrinum* 'Millie Mac' in the Miller garden.  
(Photo by William C. Miller III.)

#### Saturday Tour B – Baltimore Gardens / U.S. National Arboretum

The alternative Saturday tour will return to two popular sites visited during the 2004 ASA convention. We will first travel north to Baltimore to once again see 100-acre **Marshy Point Nursery**, the home of **Harry Weiskittel** and the wholesale nursery specializing in rhododendrons and azaleas that he and his son, **Austin**, operate. Surrounding Harry's home is a large rhododendron and azalea display garden showcasing rare trees,

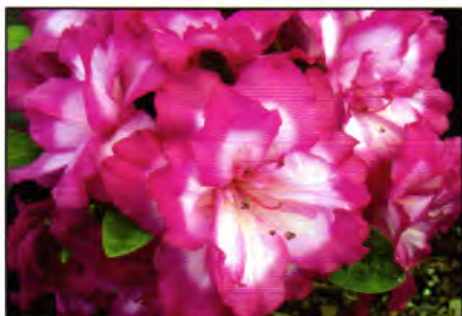


Photo 5. Purple and white azalea hybrid at Marshy Point, Henry Weiskittel's nursery.  
(Photo by Don Hyatt.)

new azalea and rhododendron hybrids, and many Marshy Point introductions that Harry has hybridized (for example, see Photo 4). We have allowed additional time this year so people have a chance to see more of the production facilities, or just admire the lovely setting of Marshy Point, which boasts nearly a mile of scenic shoreline on the northern Chesapeake Bay. A second private garden in the Baltimore area, which was not on the 2004 tour, is **Dr. Jerry Hudgen's "Fern Dell,"** a beautiful 4-1/2-acre woodland landscape that borders a rushing stream. In addition to evergreen and native azaleas, Jerry's garden hosts an extensive and well-labeled collection of rare native plants, ferns, wildflowers, and many other horticultural treasures.

After lunch, guests will return to Washington, DC, to spend the rest of the afternoon at the 446-acre **US National Arboretum**. The Arboretum is well known for the large azalea display on Mount Hamilton where Benjamin Yoe Morrison, the

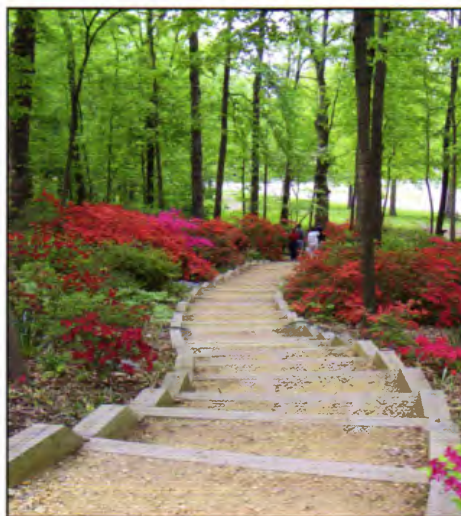


Photo 4. Azalea Trail at US National Arboretum. (Photo by Don Hyatt.)

Arboretum's first director, planted many of the Glenn Dale azaleas that he hybridized. The azalea collection has been rejuvenated and expanded by **Barbara Bullock**, the current azalea curator, who will be around to greet guests (Photo 5).

The Arboretum has many other attractions including the newly reno-

vated National Bonsai and Penjing Museum that houses one of the largest collections of miniature trees in North America, the Gotelli dwarf conifer collection, the Asian Valley, Fern Valley, and the National Herb Garden.



Photo 6. McCrillis gardens.  
(Photo by William C. Miller III.)

#### Sunday Tour C – Private Gardens / McCrillis Gardens

On Sunday, we offer only one tour that will visit three larger private gardens in excess of 2 acres, as well as the 5-acre **McCrillis Gardens**. McCrillis was a private home in an upscale neighborhood that was donated by its former owners to the park commission so the landscape could become a permanent public garden. This premier shade garden features masses of mature azaleas, striking specimen trees, and choice companion plants surrounding the original stone house (Photo 6).

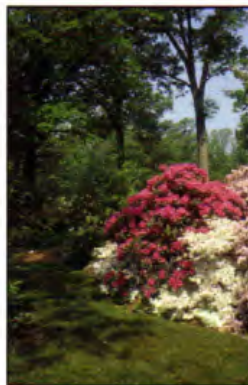


Photo 7. Reiley garden.  
(Photo by Don Hyatt.)

The private 5-acre rhododendron garden of **Ed and Mary Reiley** is both a lovely landscape and a test garden with a mature rhododendron collection representing over 775 different cultivars and species, some of which are 20 to 40 years old. In addition to many of Ed's own hybrids that are under evaluation, the garden includes evergreen and deciduous azaleas and many companion plants (Photo 7). Ed is a



noted author on horticultural topics, past president of the American Rhododendron Society, and recipient of the ARS Gold Medal.

Of interest to many of the old guard in the Azalea Society of America will be a nostalgic return to the former home of the late George Harding, one of the founders of the ASA (Photo 8). Many of George's original plantings still remain on the property, the site where **Mike and Deb White** now operate a retail azalea nursery. Mike is George Harding's grandson and continues to carry on the tradition of enriching local gardens with wonderful new azalea varieties.



Photo 8. The late George Harding. (Slide supplied by Debbie White.)

The third garden is that of **Norman and Jean Beaudry**, a lovely 2-1/2-acre sloping woodland landscape featuring more than 500 rhododendrons and azaleas including many Gable and Dexter hybrids. Along winding paths in the Beaudry's garden are a number of mature Beltsville Dwarf azaleas that are over 40 years old. The garden has many companion plants including collections of Japanese maples, magnolias, dwarf and larger conifers, wildflowers, and unusual trees (Photo 9).

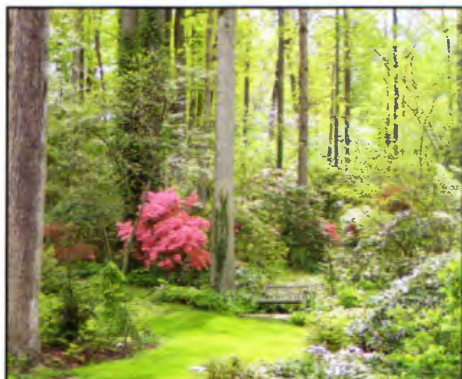


Photo 9. Garden vista at the Beaudry garden. (Photo by Don Hyatt.)

## Post-convention Tour D – Blue Ridge Mountains

After the convention, we have planned an overnight trip into the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia. This tour will leave early Monday morning, May 15, and return to the hotel by Tuesday evening, May 16, 2006. *People who have difficulty walking should be warned that some of the stops have uneven terrain and may require short hikes to fully appreciate the scenery.*

The first stop will be “**Phran's Azalea Trails**,” the 5-acre azalea garden of **Frances and Phil Louer** in Haymarket, Virginia. With over 8,000 azaleas representing 2,790 varieties and 271 hybrid groups, the Louers have one of the largest azalea collections in the region. Their landscape has approximately 200 small flowerbeds situated along winding trails in their level, wooded garden, and they have arranged their azaleas to blend in both color and size (Photo 10).



Photo 10. Frances Louer in her garden. (Photo by Don Hyatt.)

We will then head south to Charlottesville for lunch at historic **Michie Tavern**. The Tavern's traditional menu includes fried chicken, cornbread, biscuits, and a host of colonial favorites, all served in period settings. After lunch, guests will stop at **Monticello**, the home of **President Thomas Jefferson**, to tour both the house and gardens. In the afternoon, the buses will drive south on the Blue

Ridge Parkway so people can admire the scenic views. As time permits, we will make occasional stops to see native azaleas, rhododendrons, and other wildflowers up close (Photo 11).



Photo 11. *R. prinophyllum* on the Blue Ridge Parkway. (Photo by Don Hyatt.)

The night's lodging will be at the **Peaks of Otter Lodge**, a facility well known for its peaceful setting overlooking a lake at the base of the mountain peaks. Dinner will be on your own that night at the excellent and very reasonable Peaks of Otter Restaurant. One warning, though; the lodge is very remote and does not have television or phone service in the rooms. Instead of relying on high-end technologies, enjoy a peaceful walk around the lake, gather in the lodge to talk with friends, or just listen to the birds.

The next morning, the restaurant will serve guests a hearty breakfast buffet before the buses continue south to **Roanoke** for the next stop, the garden of **Paul and Barbara James**. This exquisite mountain garden covers approximately 15 acres, but is just part of approximately 1,000 acres of land extending to the mountain peaks in the distance that has been in Paul's family for over 200 years. Paul has the largest collection of the Delp rhododendrons, as well as hybrids from Russell and Velma Haag, George Ring, and many others. He has a spectacular rock garden flanked by large specimens of the native *Rhododendron calendulaceum*, as well as superb collections of other azaleas, maples, dwarf conifers, hostas, wildflowers, and



conifers, hostas, wildflowers, and almost every other plant imaginable.

After lunch, we will begin our return trip to Rockville, traveling north through the scenic Shenandoah Valley. Buses should be back at the hotel by 6:00 p.m. Tuesday evening, so guests may either extend their stay at the DoubleTree Hotel or head for home.

**Due to the number of rooms at the Peaks of Otter Lodge, space on this tour is limited, so please register early. We also request that singles try to find roommates so that we can maximize attendance. Remember, registration deadline is April 5, 2006.**

### Speakers

We have invited a number of distinguished speakers who will address a wide range of topics including horticulture trends, plant exploration, new introductions, and disease control. We will feature Mr. Stanton Gill and Dr. Harold Sweetman on Friday night, Dr. Hartwig Schepker on Saturday night, and Mr. Jim Gardiner on Sunday.

**Stanton Gill** is a regional specialist with the Central Maryland Research and Education Center. He is a tenured professor with the University of Maryland and professor of Landscape Technology with Montgomery College. In his talk, he will discuss two exotic pests that pose a severe potential for destruction of our forests: the tiny green colored beetle called the emerald ash borer and the black and white beetle called the Asian long-horned beetle. Mr. Gill will also present a low-risk pesticide approach for integrated pest management with azaleas.

**Dr. Harold Sweetman**, executive director of the Jenkins Arboretum for the past 20 years, has traveled extensively in the pursuit of expanding the arboretum plant collections. He has a PhD in biology from Boston University and chairs the research committee of the ARS. His presenta-

tion will discuss wild rhododendron species that have been transformed into tamed hybrids that are now well suited for our gardens. As Dr. Sweetman discusses hybridizing potential in the genus *Rhododendron*, he will relate experiences on several explorations that he has taken into the wild including Yunnan (China), Arunachal Pradesh (India), and the Appalachians.

**Dr. Hartwig Schepker** is the scientific director of the Rhododendron-park Company in Bremen, Germany. This 46-hectare park (114 acres) hosts an extensive collection of rhododendron species and hybrids. It includes the municipal Botanical Garden and Germany's first Green Science Center, *botanika*, a facility that attempts to visualize the topic 'biodiversity' by using the genus *Rhododendron* as its main example. A horticulturist with a PhD in plant ecology, Dr. Schepker has a keen interest in the natural communities of rhododendrons and their companion plants. He will share with us his thoughts on rhododendron diversity including personal observations from the wild in remote places like Mt. Kinabalu in Borneo, natural stands in mainland and Southeast Asia including Nepal and Yunnan, and the Great Smoky Mountains.

**Jim Gardiner** is curator of the Royal Horticultural Society Garden at Wisley, England, a post he has held for nearly 17 years. Prior to that, he trained at the Savill and Valley Gardens, Windsor; the University of Cambridge Botanic Garden; the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh; and the City of Liverpool Botanic Garden. He also served as curator of The Hillier Gardens and Arboretum. A sought-after speaker and prolific writer on all things horticulture, he is particularly noted for his expertise with magnolias. He will profile four gardens of the RHS, Wisley, in particular, as he discusses the breadth of plant collections concentrating on rhododendrons and azaleas in the garden, the rhododendron trials, and the challenges of growing and promoting the genus.

### Informal "Yakety Yaks"

In addition to our formal speakers, we have scheduled time for some shorter, late night mini-sessions and open discussions on topics of interest. One session will focus on native azaleas, beginning with a presentation of an aerial photograph taken of Gregory Bald in peak bloom (see description on p. 88). As people register for the convention, they may order a copy of that photograph and

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Rather than requiring a blindfold, we accepted his declaration of secrecy. That day Copper had a very sparse bloom and was a disappointment to all of us! Continuing to Pace, we found a wonderful yellow flame and hybrid *R. arborescens*, but the double *R. cumberlandense* of 2004 was a single this year. However, Allen soon found a double *R. cumberlandense* that was as red as red can be. He declared Pace Bald far superior to Copper.

For our next trip on June 22, noted native azalea expert Ray Head joined us. After some explanation that our real destination was beyond Copper, we swore Ray to secrecy and he agreed to help us explore the area. We discovered more *R. arborescens* hybrids, another *R. cumberlandense* and other hybrids with good color and flares. We also saw tinted pink *R. arborescens* of different shadings and some nice oranges and reds with flares. (Copper continued its weak blooming year.) During the trip home, we asked Ray about his thoughts of Pace Bald. In his usual laid-back fashion, he said, "You boys have found some very nice plants."

We looked forward to June 29, our fourth trip, because Ray was joining us again, and we expected the *cumberlandense*-type hybrids to be great. (Unfortunately Ray's transmission went out, so he went home riding a wrecker while we continued the search.) My favorite *R. arborescens*, a glowing pink with prominent yellow flare was the find of the day! Hybrids of *R. cumberlandense*

hybrids and other *R. arborescens* made this day another special one.

During the bloom season we made two additional trips: July 6 and July 20. We made more finds on each trip. Ray, who also went along on July 29, even put a label on one flame hybrid, so you know it was a good late bloomer.

On each of the six trips, we had found hybrids, and we had seen hundreds of azaleas that did not bloom. We had expanded the search area each trip, but have only covered an area maybe 400 yards long and 50 yards wide. The area is thick, but to this point, we have not seen any snakes.

Why are we now sharing our experience with Pace Bald as well as the location? We did consider keeping it a secret another year, but we decided that the beauty of God's hybrids should be shared. Is Pace Bald better than Copper? For 2005 absolutely! Do we plan additional trips looking for hybrids—yes, several, and we hope to see many of you on the mountain!

*Doley Bell and Leon Pace are charter members of the Vaseyi Chapter of the ASA and both are members of the ARS. Both are avid gardeners with numerous azaleas and rhododendrons. Hiking to see native azaleas has become a passion.*

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*continued from page 79*

accompanying CD with digital images of the azaleas on Gregory Bald. A second session will focus on hybridizing, leading off with some of the plants developed by local hybridizers in our region. Join us for the discussion, bring some pictures of your own to share, and make some new friends.

## Plants

The hosting chapters have been actively propagating many of the convention plants for the sale. We are anxious to showcase rare azaleas and rhododendrons from our region including hard-to-find clones, seedlings and selections from the wild, and new introductions from local hybridizers.

We will offer many new azaleas and rhododendrons developed by our local hybridizers including Dr. Sandra McDonald, Pete Vines, Buck Clagett, Joe Klimavicz, Jane Goodrich, George Ring, the late Augie Kehr, Bob Stewart, Walter Przypek, and others. We will have some rare clones from the late Joe Gable, the late Weldon Delp, and Russell and Velma Haag, too. As banquet favors we are raising native azalea and rhododendron seedlings from rare forms observed in the wild.

Since people may not be familiar with varieties in our sale, we are preparing a CD with color images of the plants in bloom that will be available prior to the convention.

## Banquets

We have arranged sumptuous banquets with keynote speakers for both Saturday and Sunday evenings. Saturday's will be less formal, a buffet featuring two favorites, roast beef *au jus* and grilled salmon with lemon caper sauce. Naturally, the chef will prepare a wide array of elegant side dishes.

The Sunday dinner will be a more formal banquet featuring a choice of entrees: red snapper served with coconut infused Thai rice, or roasted pork tenderloin and lavender wine reduction served with sweet potato stack *au gratin*. Be sure to save room for dessert, hazelnut torte with Grand Marnier sauce.

## Closing Thoughts

Please join us this spring for an exciting joint convention designed to bring our two organizations closer together. We want to encourage younger families in our societies to visit Washington, DC, so we are waiving the basic registration fee for children under 12 when accompanied by parent or guardian. For additional information to help plan your trip, as well as expanded descriptions of the gardens on tour, including many pictures, please check our convention Web site: [www.arspvc.org/2006](http://www.arspvc.org/2006).