

## Vaseyi Chapter

John Brown, Newsletter Editor

**Dr. Charles Horn**, professor of biology and department chair at Newberry College, was the guest speaker at the chapter's March meeting.

Dr. Horn outlined the history of six years of field research into the distribution of *R. eastmanii* and its locations in the Carolinas. He discovered that *R. eastmanii* thrives in the Broad River basin north of Columbia and south of the North Carolina state line. He hopes to find the plant farther up the reaches of the Broad River which is fed by the Green River just south of Hendersonville.

In April the chapter met at **Doley and Melody Bell's** garden and discussed weather damage, its causes, effects and possible remedies.

Chapter officers and directors for the year are: **Doley Bell**, president; **Jackson McCarter**, vice president; **John Brown**, secretary; **Bob Stelloh**, treasurer; **Ed Collins**, past president; **Leon Pace**, director 2006-08; **Dwayne Clayburn**, director 2006-08; **Ken Majer**, director 2005-07; and **Vivian Abney**, directory 2005-07.

## Letters to the Editor

### My First "Azalean" — Wow!

I have been a devoted gardener for most of my life. As a "young" 68-year-old, I can still remember my beloved Godfather picking me up on Saturday mornings and taking me with him to survey the local country club golf course and grounds in my hometown of Newport News, Virginia. He was a landscape architect, but finishing his education in the Great Depression there were very few positions for people with that degree. He was hired to work in the Newport News Shipyard by my late father who was an official of that firm. The Saturday job was a part-time avocation for Elton Sault and I remember those journeys quite well.

I have grown and propagated azaleas for more than 40 years and just became acquainted with your organization after contacting **Bob Stelloh** about an article I was writing on azaleas for *The Virginia Gardener*. I told him that the very least I could do was to join the ASA, which I am pleased to have done. I am currently the President of the Virginia Daffodil Society and recently stepped down as a Director of the American Boxwood Society (I'm a daylily enthusiast, as well!). I want you to know that next to the semi-annual publication of the European Boxwood and Topiary Society, your (our) Society publishes the finest quarterly publication I have seen in a long, long time.

...Thank you for producing such an excellent quarterly publication. They will add a great deal to my love for azaleas, particularly when the now extended bloom season is over late this summer.

Ross A. Hotchkiss  
Richmond, Virginia

## Mercer Arboretum Offers Chance to See Full Encore® Azalea Collection

Visitors to the Mercer Arboretum & Botanic Gardens in Humble, Texas, will find a surprise on the azalea berms adjacent to Cypress Creek. Spring, summer or fall the azaleas are blooming.

This phenomenon is brought to the Mercer Arboretum by Encore® azalea, the only patented brand of azaleas to bloom in spring, summer, and fall. The 23 varieties of Encore® azalea offer a growth habit and bloom color for every landscape.

Gardeners can now view the entire Encore® azalea collection on a berm near Cypress Creek directly behind the prehistoric plant walk. Through the presence of the Encore® azalea collection, gardeners will be able to see how the Encore® azaleas fare in Houston-area climates.

The creation of plant breeder Robert E. "Buddy" Lee of Independence, Louisiana, the evergreen Encore® azaleas enjoy more sun than traditional azaleas, but offer the same easy care.

Encore® azaleas begin blooming each spring like a traditional azalea. Once this initial blooming concludes, new shoots begin to grow and set buds. Then blooms emerge again in mid-summer and continue in many areas until first frost; a feat no other azalea can consistently achieve.

Mercer Arboretum & Botanic Gardens—now a nationally recognized horticultural facility spanning more than 300 acres—owes its existence to the Mercers, who purchased the original 14.5 acres of wild woods alongside Cypress Creek in 1949. The plant collections of Mercer are located within this 14.5-acre loop that also is now home to the Encore® azaleas.

The only opening in the wooded land when the Mercers arrived was a small burned area. Over the next 24 years, the Mercers created a garden paradise despite floods, droughts, and nature's other familiar ravages. Today, the more than 300 acres of East Texas piney woods are said to showcase the region's largest collection of native and cultivated plants.

Aldine Westfield Road divides the facility into two special use areas. The east side is home to the Botanic Gardens with over 20 acres of developed gardens, including herb, ginger, fern, daylily, bamboo and endangered species collections, color displays, and extensive walking trails. The west side of Aldine Westfield is home to the Arboretum, including picnic pavilions and three miles of walking trails that wind through beautifully preserved woodlands with environmental interpretation.

Encore® azaleas are grown by a network of growers, and are available at local garden centers, landscape supply houses, and [www.plantsbymail.com](http://www.plantsbymail.com).

To learn more about Mercer Arboretum call (281) 443-8731 or visit the Web Site at [www.hcp4.net/mercer](http://www.hcp4.net/mercer).