



The Azalean

The Newsletter of the Azalea Society of America

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MORE OBSERVATIONS BY B.Y. MORRISON

In the last issue of this newsletter we published excerpts from B. Y. Morrison's correspondence with Hugh Caldwell, an azalea fancier who lived in Charlotte, N.C. Morrison at that time had retired as the first director of the National Arboretum and was developing the back acre hybrids in Pass Christian, Miss.

We interrupt the publication of the correspondence with Caldwell in order to introduce fragments from Morrison's extensive correspondence with Corinne Murrah (Mrs. William F. Murrah), for whom Morrison named one of his finest Back Acre cultivars. Mr. Murrah at the time (1959 through the early 60's) was busy developing the Memphis Azalea Trail, the earliest mass planting of Glenn Dales outside the National Arboretum.

An aside of interest to today's inflation-weary collectors is the fact that Morrison arranged for Mrs. Murrah to buy most of the Memphis collection from the Claude Wilson Nursery at Gulfport, Miss., for 75 cents per plant, regardless of size. And some were big plants.

Under Morrison's steady tutelage Mrs. Murrah also built an impressive collection at her country home, "The Hill," outside Memphis, to such an extent that Morrison in 1964 told Frederick P. Lee that "Corinne Murrah possesses the outstanding collection of Glenn Dales [in the U.S.] and some Satsukis, plus a first trial of Back Acres."

Morrison was intensely interested in the Satsukis. In answer to Mrs. Murrah's questions about the apparent unpredictability of their sporting, he wrote the following in the spring of 1959:

"The Japanese grow Satsukis with their chief pleasure in the fact that the plants are continually sporting, and since they grow them as specimens in pots these sporting branches are controlled and enjoyed as such. The English descriptions that we have do not show

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THE HARRIS HYBRIDS

By Dewey Garrett
Anderson, S.C.

An unusual group of azalea hybrids is exciting the limited number of collectors who have seen these beautiful plants in blossom, and is nourishing competitive acquisition. Crosses of Glenn Dales, Nakaharais, Back Acres and Satsukis, these azaleas are large-flowered and evergreen; most bloom in late mid-season.

They are called the Harris Hybrids, named after their originator, James Harris, a nurseryman in Lawrenceville, Georgia.

Thus far Harris has named 21 cultivars, and has 15 or 20 to be named in 1981. His selections are the result of more than 330 crosses he made over a 10-year period. No cultivar has yet been registered.

Many of the named plants have won awards, mostly in Georgia because their distribution is not yet widespread outside the South. Dorothy Clark, a really big-blooming pink, has won best-in-show three times; Pride of Lawrenceville, another pink, has won once; and Bruce Hancock, a big cascading white with a pink border was given a silver medal by the United Garden Clubs of Georgia. Dorothy Clark, another huge bloomer (light pink center, light red border) flowers early mid-season in Georgia, then continues to pop blooms one or two at a time through June.

The variety that's created the most excitement is Pink Cascade, which finally was released commercially late last year. Its two-inch salmon pink blooms with a red blotch are handsome enough in themselves to qualify Pink Cascade as a welcome newcomer, but this variety's most remarkable characteristic is its habit of growth: new wood grows straight down. It's as limber as Wandering Jew (*Tradescantia fluminensis*). You can wrap it around your finger like a piece of string.

The Harris Hybrids (continued)

Harris grows Pink Cascade in a hanging basket, and it cascades downward for three spectacular feet. I haven't tried it as a ground cover but it ought to make a good one; it layers wherever it touches. The competition for this, one of Harris' newest and certainly most spectacular cultivars, is so keen that Harris was offered \$1,000 for his stock plant, but he turned it down.

As for hardiness of the Harris Hybrids, testing is far from complete, as is inevitable with hybrids as new as these. But look at the parentage: Glenn Dale, Satsuki, Back Acre, Nakaharai. My supposition is that the offspring should do as well, and this they have done wherever they've been tested. Northerners tend to think of these new hybrids as "southern" azaleas because of their made-in-Georgia label, but what one must realize is that Harris grows his plants in northernmost Georgia and I grow in the northern extremity of South Carolina. Both of us are in the Piedmont area of the Blue Ridge. Winter temperatures drop to zero, sometimes below. The climate's very much like Washington, D.C. I've grown the Harris Hybrids for three years. There've been some bad winters in that time, yet I've had no bud burn nor bark split.

As for distribution, some of the Harrises are growing in Pine Bluff, Arkansas, some are on Long Island and some plants are as far south as Fort Myers, Florida.

James Harris' description of his named cultivars follows. Time of bloom is for Lawrenceville, Georgia.

Betty Hemmingway: #90, Delos x Amaghasa. Double white, 3-1/2-4". Tall grower. Mid-May. 0°.

Bruce Hancock(Azaleadendron): #200, White Gumpo x Grace Freeman. 3-1/2", white with pink border. 3' wide, cascading 4' downward in 5 years. Early May. +5°.

Bryan Harris: #97, Pink Gumpo x Grace Freeman. 3-1/2", light pink with lighter center. 3' tall by 3' wide in 9 years. Gumpo-type foliage. Mid May. -0°.

Dorothy Clark: #87, Grace Freeman x Amaghasa. Blooms heavy texture, 4-1/2" wide, light pink center with light red border. 3' tall by 3' wide in 9 years. Early May. +0°.

Vibrant: #87, Grace Freeman x Amaghasa. 4", white with pink border. 2' tall by 3' wide in 9 years. Early May. +0°.

Fascination: #87, Grace Freeman x Amaghasa. 4-1/2", pink with red border. 2-1/2' tall by 3' wide in 9 years. Early May. -0°.

Edith Henderson: #73, Bankā x Target. 4-1/2", salmon pink blooms with red blotch. 3-1/2' tall by 3-1/2' wide in 9 years. Mid May. +0°.

Ellie Harris: #3, Sherwood Orchid x Fedora. 2" hose-in-hose, very heavy blooming. 3-1/2' tall by 3' wide in 10 years. Early April. Very hardy, -5°.

The Harris Hybrids (continued)

Parfait: #3, Sherwood Orchid x Fedora. 2", pink fading to white in center with red dots. 3-1/2' wide by 3-1/2' tall in 10 years. Early April. Very hardy, -5⁰.

Rivermist: #3, Sherwood Orchid x Fedora. 2", light orchid blooms, sometimes as many as 30 in a truss. Early April. Very hardy, -5⁰.

Frosted Orange: #80, Bunkwa x Target. 3", white with orange red border. 2-1/2' tall by 3' wide in 9 years. Very late blooming. This cultivar has withstood 3 winters on Long Island. -0⁰.

Georgia Giant: #177, Moonbeam x Lilacina. Very large star-shaped white, fragrant, up to 5-1/2" wide. 4-1/2' tall by 3-1/2' wide in 8 years. Early May. -0⁰.

Harris Purple: #63, Martha Hitchcock x Wakabusi, 3-1/2" dark purple hose-in-hose. 3-1/2' tall by 3-1/2' wide in 9 years. Mid May. -0⁰.

Joan Garrett: #73, Bankā x Target. Very large salmon pink with red blotch up to 6" across. 4' wide by 3' tall in 9 years. Mid May. -0⁰.

Miss Suzie: #2, Hershey Orange x Hershey Red. 2", bright red hose-in-hose. Strong, compact grower; new woody growth is red; 2' tall by 3' wide in 10 years. Early April. -0⁰.

Pink Cascade: #139, Nakaharai x Bunkwa. 2", salmon pink with red blotch. 30" wide by 3' straight down in hanging basket; also hangs over walls, layers itself anywhere it touches ground. Early May. Very hardy, -0⁰.

Pride Of Lawrenceville: #26, Bunkwa x Hino. 2", pink with red border. 3-1/2' tall by 5' wide in 10 years. Likes sun, early May. Very hardy; this cultivar has withstood 3 winters on Long Island, -10⁰.

Rain Fire: #177, Moonbeam x Lilacina. 3", screaming blood red; holds up better in sun than most in this color range. 24" tall by 30" wide in 8 years. Mid May. -0⁰.

Rhonda Stiteler: #90, Delos x Amaghasa. 2-1/2"; double, with 20 petals; pink. Variegated foliage. 30" tall by 24" wide in 9 years. Mid May. -0⁰.

Seven Dwarfs: #147, Okina Nishiki x Grace Freeman. 2-1/2", seven different blooms. 2' tall by 5' wide in 9 years. Late May. -0⁰.

Gloria Still: #194, Albert & Elizabeth x Fedora. 2-3/4" pink and white variegated blooms carried on truss that is larger than most rhododendrons'; easily forced for Christmas. 2' tall by 3' wide in 6 years. Early May. Has not been tested for hardiness.

The Harris Hybrids (continued)

COMMERCIAL AVAILABILITY

Plants in limited numbers are available from:

James Harris
538 Swanson Drive
Lawrenceville, Georgia 30245

George Beasley
Trans Plant
Lavonia, Georgia

Rooted cuttings will be available within the year from the following:

Azalea Acres Farm
Frank B. White
6419 Princess Garden Parkway
Lanham, Maryland 20801

George Harding
22525 Wild Cat Road
Germantown, Maryland 20767

More Observations by B.Y. Morrison (continued)

what the type plant was nor the range of sports that should be expected from it. That I am now sure is the reason the printed descriptions are so hard to follow.

"IF, and it is a large if, if I can persuade Dr. Moriya to get for me the description of the original plant then we could always know what was what and recognize the sports as they appeared.

"If, and it's again a big if, if my theory is correct that the sport itself will do no more sporting, then the problem is reduced to handling the "mother" variety. I think this is true from the many examples we have handled. For example, Johga sports and we grew as cuttings three forms from it that we have now not only the original Mai Hime, which sports all the time, but a pure rose pink, the same rose pink with a deeper blotch, a pale rose pink with white margin and deeper almost crimson blotch, a pale rose pink with white margin and deeper almost crimson blotch. So far I have not gotten a pure white but I am sure that that is possible, and in time it will appear. Now shall we give to these sports, all of which are fixed, new names? I would think so.

"To a certain degree this same problem of sporting is appearing in my own seedlings, and we are facing it by flowering every plant. I think once more that I have found the way to handle it, but I could be wrong. The variations in the clones like your namesake are several, but as far as I can observe [they] vary

More Observations by B.Y. Morrison (continued)

ONLY in the amount of white in the center. Apparently as the plant matures, and makes more and more small flowering shoots, the variation almost disappears. But how does one tell this to customers who have never seen or know such azaleas? A friend of mine bought among other things Bravura from Tingle and got only rose colored flowers. I wrote him just to be patient and see if the proper pattern would not appear as the plants matured."

Morrison addressed some of the problems of winterkill in a 17 May 1960 letter to Mrs. Murrah:

"We too lost buds on things that had never lost buds before, including the large plants of Mary Margaret! Almost every nursery plant of Arctic lost buds, but the big plants did not.

"From all reports that I have had--and they came from a variety of places--it was the frost in either late October or early November that did the damage. I do not recall that here, but others insist on it. It is always true that if plants are not absolutely dormant when that first autumn frost comes, or at least have most of the sap down, trouble follows. I do not believe that the cold spell you mention, with lows of 15° and 18° by night and 31° by day, would be too serious as we often had such in Washington and lower in Maryland where the breeding work [on the Glenn Dales] was done.

"You did not, I know, fertilize late, but several people did, and lost everything.

"As for defoliation, that may or may not be serious. Actually many plants other than azaleas have a way of shedding leaves in cold weather, apparently as if they knew that a reduced leaf surface would aid them. Scientists are wary of anyone who thinks that plants think, so don't quote me on that one, but the fact remains that plants like our common wild magnolia, *M. virginiana*, which is completely evergreen here, is completely deciduous in Massachusetts and perfectly hardy there. I do not recall any personal experience with leaf shedding in Satsukis, so offer no comment.

"The only other thing that comes to mind as a cause of winter loss in the north was the combination of low temperatures and bright sun, and if we also had wind the total losses then were much heavier.

"One more scrap of idea. I found up north that when I had late planting to do any frost penetrated far more deeply in the newly-turned soil than in any adjacent undisturbed area. It was not just the undisturbed mulch, but the soil itself. So contrary to usual practice I made the surface of the newly moved soil as compact as possible. I did not stamp it down, but beat it with my hand and then put on a little heavier mulch than usual, keeping the mulch on the surface and not letting it get into the base of the shoots. It did not always work but usually did."

USDA'S NEW "GROWING AZALEAS AND RHODODENDRONS"

The Department of Agriculture recently released a revised version of "Growing Azaleas and Rhododendrons," written by Erik A. Neumann, Curator of Education at the National Arboretum, and Ralph E. Webb, Entomologist at the Agricultural Research Center in Beltsville, MD.

The revision lists varieties which are best for various climates, and presents the latest USDA gospel on maintaining soil acidity, protecting plants from insects and diseases, plus the routines of fertilizing, watering, mulching and pruning.

For a free copy write to USDA, SEA Publications Requests and Distributions, Room 6007, 6007, South Building, Washington, D.C., 20250. Ask for Home & Garden Bulletin No. 71.

THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF SATSUKI AZALEAS

Several omissions and errors in the transliteration sheets which accompany the three-volume Japanese Language Encyclopedia of Satsuki Azaleas, first identified to our readers in the January 1980 issue of this newsletter, have been rectified in subsequent issues. But as late as October (see The Azalean, Volume 2, No. 4) we still had no names for a handfull of cultivard pictured in Volumes II and III.

Finally we are able to rectify those omissions by publishing transliterations furnished us by Fred Galle (Ida Cason Callaway Foundation, Pine Mountain, Goergia) and by Barry Yinger, surely our farthest-flung member (Chollipo Arboretum, South Korea). There are slight (and understandable) variations in the anglicizations provided by Mssrs. Gale and Yinger. Lacking as we do a basis for choosing between the variations, we list both, thusly:

VOLUME II,	Page 66	Getsu Kōkan
	Page 102	Shugetsu
	Page 108	Shinkyō
	Page 150	Tomei Nishiki
VOLUME III	Page 50	Kinkazan
	Page 70	Sakuragata
	Page 74	Shuho No Hikari (also Shyuho No Hikari)
	Page 76	Shoshikubai (also Shyo Chikubai)
	Page 80	Shoten (also Shoyten)

Mr. Yinger's letter to us adds the counsel that there are several methods, none entirely satisfactory, for transcribing the Japanese language into romanized syllables. He also gives us the unwelcome news that we regularly have been mispronouncing the name "Satsuki" itself. The pronunciation should be either "Sat-Ski," which is the one favored by most Japanese, or "Sat-Su-Ski."

ORGANIZATIONAL ODDS AND ENDS

Back Copies Of The Azalean

Back copies of The Azalean are available for \$1.25 each. Send your orders to the Secretary, ASA. As a guide for tentative buyers, the following list identifies articles in issues throughout the past year which may have reference value:

January 1980	The Robin Hill Azaleas, Part I, by Matthew Nosal
	The Linwood Hardy Azaleas, by Frank B. White
April 1980	Deciduous Azaleas, Part I: The Native Americans, by Judson Hardy
	The Robin Hill Azaleas, Part II
	Addendum on the Linwood Hardy Azaleas, by George Harding
July 1980	Deciduous Azaleas, Part II: The Asiatic Species
	The Beltsville Dwarfs
July 1980 (Special Issue)	The Gable Azaleas, by George Ring
October 1980	The North Carolina Hybrids
	Observations by B.Y. Morrison on the Glenn Dales

Preparation For 1981 ASA Meeting

Each Chapter is asked to nominate one representative to a committee which will try to determine why the 1980 Annual Meeting of the ASA was so sparsely attended, and to recommend ways in which the appeal of the 1981 meeting can be broadened. Chapter Presidents (except for Brookside Chapter, which already has responded) should send the names and addresses and telephone numbers of their representatives (one for each chapter) to the Committee Chairman, John Shaffer, 10104 South Glen Road, Potomac, MD, 20854, as soon as possible.

Availability Of Slides

Slides of azaleas still are available from the Society for rental at a nominal fee by Chapters and ASA members. The collection contains 131 slides of the Glenn Dale cultivars, 22 Linwoods, 32 Back Acres, 42 Satsukis and 43 Robin Hills. Contact the Secretary at the letterhead address.

Natural Production Of Hybrids

In answer to our call to members to share with others any experience with azaleas which is of general interest, Mr. Lee Amann has written from the Eastern Shore of Maryland, describing how natural hybrids have established themselves on that sandy low-lying peninsula. Mr. Amann writes:

Loblolly Bay
Bozman, MD 21612
14 November 1980

"Back in 1961 I purchased 11 acres of wooded waterfront property here in Talbot County on the Eastern Shore with the idea of establishing a camellia and azalea garden. I soon found that establishing a garden in absentia presented many unexpected problems. First, the soil under all that lovely pine mulch turned out to be a heavy gray clay, impervious to everything, as it had never been cultivated, ever. This is an original native pine woods with towering trees of great age. Secondly, the soil acidity and salinity from wind-blown salt spray from the tidal creeks and rivers created a condition making ordinary culture difficult if not impossible.

"As a result I embarked on an elaborate program of drainage and irrigation in an effort to overcome at least some of the more obvious problems. The extensive drainage system produced mounds of unused soil, the irrigation system soon promoted the growth of a fine carpet of moss on these mounds, and where they were in close proximity to large azaleas they were soon covered with azalea seedlings, hundreds of them. It seemed unlikely that these tiny plants could survive on their own, without assistance, but some of them did and after a few years came into bloom. At this point, I became interested in trying to help, as the variety and excellence of the early blooming types amazed me.

"These first appeared under Day Spring and showed likely crosses with Coral Bells, Pink Pearl, Gardenia Supreme and Printemps among others. Subsequently seedlings of Glacier, Merlin, Dream, Buccaneer, Peter Pan, Geisha, La Lumiere, Indica Rosea and others not identifiable either by proximity or type began to appear. Even a few plants that appear to have the characteristics of both evergreen and deciduous azaleas put in an appearance.

"In form these plants vary from nearly recumbant types to others 7 feet tall. However most fall in the range from 2 to 4 feet with their width increasing each year. Some of the earlier seedlings are now about 15 years old. Some are semi-evergreen but the better ones are largely evergreen. A few show some interesting fall color.

"Seedlings were mostly left where they germinated until after they had bloomed, then were planted around large trees for protection until they were large enough to go into the garden on their own. Out of the thousands of seedlings that grew here only a few hundred have survived and only about half of these have some merit. I have rooted cuttings from about 75 of the better ones and as these new plants are put out in the garden to grow, and as it becomes evident that they can continue to survive, they will be made available to anyone who may be interested.

"The garden here is always open to the public and usually has a few hundred visitors each year. It can be reached from Route 50 by turning onto Route 322 at Easton, then to Route 33 through St. Michaels to Route 579 for Bozman. At Bozman turn left into Quaker Neck Road and follow it for 1-1/2 miles to the small Loblolly Bay sign on the right. You may drive in as there is parking space."

Mr. Amann's address is Loblolly Bay, Bozman, MD, 21612.

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