

# Virginia Celebrates Azaleas:

## ASA Convention May 1-4, 2009

The Northern Virginia Chapter extends a warm welcome to ASA members in 2009. We are delighted to host the ASA National Convention and have planned a memorable experience for you. Our peak azalea blooming season should coincide with the convention in early May along with a wealth of flowering plants that always make spring in Virginia special.

Virginia truly does celebrate azaleas. We are fortunate to live in a region where the climate and soil conditions are nearly perfect for growing evergreen azaleas. The proliferation of evergreen azaleas in the mid-Atlantic region has led to a quest for new and better varieties with improvements in flower color, texture, foliage quality, plant habit and hardiness. A number of our chapter members are hybridizers and look forward to sharing their latest crosses with fellow members.

Our headquarters is the Crowne Plaza Hotel, 2200 Centerville Road, Herndon, Virginia, just minutes from Dulles International Airport. Its convenient location is 22 miles from Washington, D.C., and only four miles from the Smithsonian Udvar-Hazy Air & Space Museum. The hotel is offering a special \$94 convention rate. Reservations may be made by calling 800-227-6963 or online at [www.cpdulles.com](http://www.cpdulles.com). The hotel offers free parking, a 24-hour complimentary shuttle to and from Dulles Airport, and an on-site Enterprise Car Rental Desk.

### Friday, May 1

The convention officially opens at 7 p.m. Friday, May 1. The Board meeting is at 2 p.m. and registration begins at 2 p.m.. The plant sale opens at 4 p.m. You should plan to arrive in the afternoon, so you can be settled in for the opening meeting. Most routes heading away from Washington can be rather congested during the afternoon "rush" hour, which often begins before



▲ Joe Klimavicz hybrid 'Sandy Dandy' grows among other seedlings under evaluation in his garden.

▼ 'Caitlin Marie' (left) and 'Lovely Linda' (right), two introductions by Joe Klimavicz as seen in his garden.



3 p.m. on Fridays. Approaching the hotel from the west, to include Dulles Airport, is easier at that time of day.

### Friday Evening Program

Following welcoming announcements at 7 p.m., the evening's program sets the stage for the theme of the convention. We will give a brief slide preview of some of the gardens we will visit on Saturday and Sunday, followed with presentations by **Tony Dove** and **Pete Vines**.



Tony is a Past President of the ASA, serving in 1985. Following his 1969 graduation from the University of Maryland with a degree in Environmental Horticulture, Tony designed and constructed the lovely London Towne Gardens which you may have visited during the 2004 ASA Convention. Since that time, Tony has held a number of prestigious positions including Chief of Grounds Management for the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. He now serves as the Horticulturist for the 3000-acre Smithsonian Environmental Research Center in Edgewater, Maryland.

His subject is "Celebrating 200 Seasons—One Man, One Garden," describing how his 10-acre private garden went from essentially seedlings to maturity during the past 50 years. He will explain the importance of design with long-term relationships in mind, not only for the garden but also for the gardener. Tony's stunning mature landscape in Harwood, Maryland, features not only azaleas but an array of choice companion plants that make it truly a garden for all seasons.

A prominent local Northern Virginia hybridizer, **Pete Vines** will talk about his development of the popular "Holly Springs Evergreen Azalea Hybrids." Although Pete has since retired to Amelia Island, Florida, he has left behind a legacy of superb azaleas that are valuable resources for the landscaper as well as the collector.

### Saturday, May 2

On Saturday, we will tour gardens in the western part of Fairfax County, Loudoun County, and Prince William County. The buses will leave the hotel at approximately 8:30 a.m. and return to the Crowne Plaza at approximately 4:30 p.m.

#### Dan and Barbara Krabill Garden

**Dan and Barbara Krabill's** garden is on a half-acre lot in McLean, Virginia. Their garden began in 1990 with about 200 small azaleas that they moved from their previous garden next door. At present, the garden consists of ap-

proximately 1,100 varieties of evergreen azaleas and a much smaller number of other plants including rhododendrons, hostas, perennials, and annuals. The evergreen azaleas are generally planted by hybrid group, and include more than 400 different Glenn Dales, about 125 Kurumes, and 90 Sat-suki. In addition, nearly all of the Back Acres and Robin Hills are represented, as well as many named hybrids by **Bob Stewart** and **Joe Klimavicz**. Don't miss the chance to see this amazing garden in full bloom.

#### Don Hyatt Garden

**Don Hyatt's** garden is a mature landscape that has seen many changes since he first started the garden in 1951 at the age of 3! The 3/4-acre property originally had a high oak canopy with an understory of dogwood trees where many of the azaleas and rhododendrons have grown. The loss of several large trees in recent years could be seen as a setback, but Don has taken this as an opportunity to allow the garden to evolve. The front yard has wide irregular borders of evergreen azaleas and rhododendrons in various color schemes. Don is particularly fond of his wildflower collection, which includes trillium, ferns, and native orchids including a large stand of yellow lady's slippers. The native blue phlox is well represented throughout the garden. The landscape in Don's backyard features large azaleas and spectacular rhododendrons, many of which Don has raised from seed.

Throughout the landscape are many deciduous azaleas in varying colors including named Exbury and Knap Hill hybrids, native azaleas, and specimens from Don's deciduous azalea hybridizing program. Don't miss the chance to view this spectacular garden in all its glory.

#### Joe and Brenda Klimavicz Garden

Since the late 1980s, **Joe Klimavicz** has been hybridizing evergreen azaleas in his 1/3-acre Vienna, Virginia, backyard. This garden is an example of highly intensive cultivation. Each year, Joe makes about 10 crosses and brings

▼ Azaleas feature prominently in the Krabill garden.

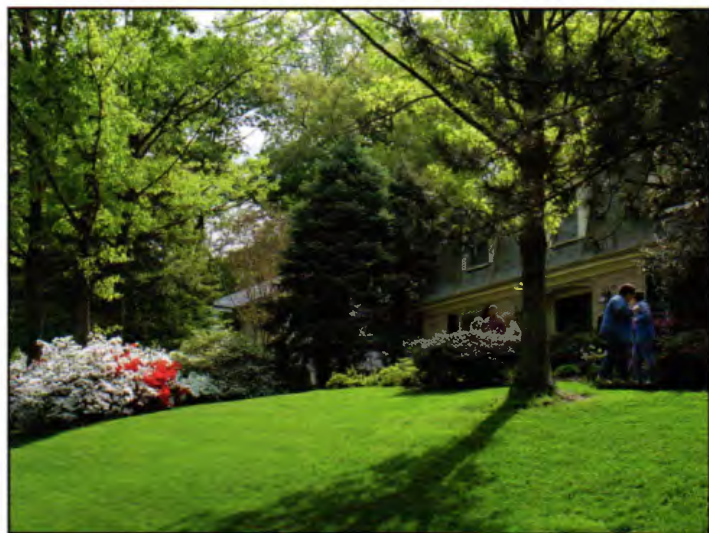


Photo Don Hyatt

▼ Sandra McDonald hybrid 'David's Choice' featured in the Hyatt landscape.

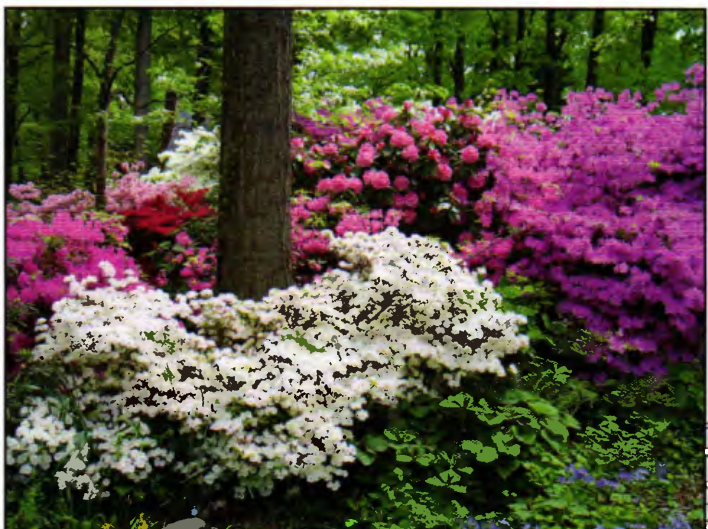


Photo Don Hyatt



50-100 new seedlings out of his basement and into his cold frames. He discards almost all of them after they flower, retaining only the best. Specific hybridization objectives include a plant that is hardy, floriferous, and has a flower that is long lasting and bright in color. He has registered 10 plants to date. This tour gives azalea growers a great inside view into hybridizing.

### Lunch at Meadowlark Gardens

We will enjoy lunch in one of the most beautiful settings in Virginia, Meadowlark Botanical Gardens. This 95-acre public park located in densely populated Fairfax County is a gem where visitors can take in the beauty of well-landscaped grounds, ponds, wildlife and a central reception center. We will allow enough time for a short stroll through this majestic green space, but attendees are encouraged to return on their own to fully appreciate these lovely grounds.

### Phil and Frances Louer Garden

Phran's Azalea Trails (**Frances and Phil Louer**) includes about 150 separate flowerbeds of azaleas and rhododendrons along winding trails on five naturally landscaped acres near Haymarket, Virginia. There are more than 5,000 azaleas and 200 rhododendrons planted in these beds. Most of these are in wooded areas, but some are in full sun. Altogether, the collection has more than 9,000 azaleas (including those in pots yet to be planted) representing more than 3,000 varieties and 221 hybrid groups.

Intermixed with the azaleas are many wildflowers, thousands of daffodils, and hostas. Frances has collected a large quantity of hostas and has bravely planted them in many locations in defiance of the deer browsing everywhere! The mature azalea and rhododendron plants put on an impressive display every spring, with old favorites, rare varieties, and new introductions arranged to blend in both color and size.

### Saturday Evening Program

We will return to the Crowne Plaza hotel in time for a rest, a cash bar social hour, and the plant sale. Again, the plant sale opens at 4 p.m. Dinner for Saturday evening is on your own.

▼ Just a few of the 9,000 azaleas in the Louer garden.



The meeting commences at 7 p.m. Following a few brief announcements we will enjoy two expert presentations, one by **Clarence Towe** and the other by **George McLellan**. Afterwards, the plant sale opens once again so attendees can have additional time to look for plants admired during the garden tours that day.

**Clarence Towe** is a retired Superintendent of Schools in South Carolina, but has spent much of his life studying native azaleas in the wild. He is the well-known author of the book *American Azaleas* and noted expert on native plants of all kinds.

His subject tonight is "American Azaleas: A Second Look." After continuing study of plant populations in the wild combined with scientific advances including polyploid analysis and DNA testing, scientists have discovered some exciting new relationships among our native azaleas. Join Clarence as he shares with us these amazing new discoveries as well as possible new species recently identified in the United States.

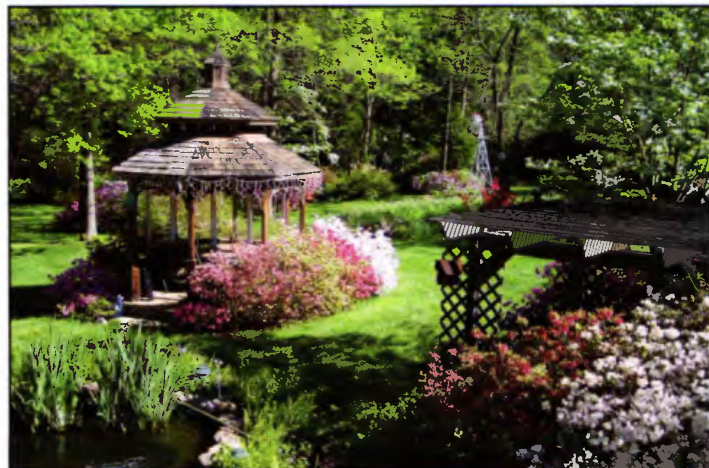
**George McLellan** holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Marketing from the University of Maryland. After spending many years in the family building materials business, he established his own landscape design operation, My Bloom-in' Garden. An expert photographer and recent recipient of the Silver Medal from the American Rhododendron Society, George has spent much time pursuing the study and documentation of our native azaleas and other native plants.

George will be "Celebrating our Native Flora—Coast to Coast." From Cape Breton in Nova Scotia, to the Appalachians, to the Northern Rockies, to Yosemite and Big Sur, George will take us to some of the most scenic spots in North America as he celebrates our native flora. He will not only discuss the amazing differences among the diverse native plant materials that inhabit these locations but will also point out some amazing similarities.

### Sunday, May 3

The Sunday bus tours will take us to gardens in eastern Fairfax County with a box lunch at Green Spring Farm Park. The buses will leave at approximately 8:30 a.m. and return to the Crowne Plaza by 4 p.m.

▼ Gazebo in the backyard of the Louer garden.







▲ Dave escorts visitors along a trail in the Nanney garden.

### Dave and Leslie Nanney Garden

The garden of **Leslie and Dave Nanney** is a two-and-a-half acre woodland garden containing more than 2,500 azaleas and more than 1,000 varieties. The Nanneys began their collection more than 35 years ago with the initial house warming gift azaleas from Leslie's mother, **Frances Louer**. The garden is targeted to the plant collector, with many of the beds organized to display the work of a single hybridizer. It is organized in beds separated by winding paths, encouraging the visitor to focus on groupings of individual plants. This provides a unique opportunity to compare the breeding objectives and tastes of such important contributors as Bob Stewart, Pete Vines (Holly Springs), Bob Gartrell (Robin Hills), Buck Clagett (Bowie Mills) and many others.

Stroll along the stone-lined paths highlighted with varieties of Japanese maples, hostas, ferns, and other shade loving plants. Mixed throughout are selections of Glenn Dale and Satsuki azaleas. The garden displays many mature plants more than 25 years old in the front yard while the recently cleared back gardens have more recent additions. The garden is a work in progress, demonstrating that gardening is not just a product but is a continuous and wondrous process.

### Bob and Betty Stewart Garden

The Stewart garden offers a unique environment for the azalea enthusiast to enjoy. It has an extensive azalea collection representing many hybrids with impressive diversity, most of which will not be found in any garden center. **Bob** started hybridizing with a few crosses in 1990 and increased the number each year. He has evaluated thousands of seedlings over the years since.

Many of the seedlings from Bob's crosses can take your breath away with wonderfully exciting blooms and outstanding foliage on plants with great form and improved hardiness. He has named and registered quite a few hybrids, and there are many others under number that are still being evaluated. Visiting this garden is an opportunity to observe an avid hybridizing program in progress, and a chance to gather ideas about innovative plant care techniques.

### Lunch at Green Spring Farm Park

Green Spring Farm Park will be our stop for lunch. This public park is a green oasis in a densely developed area of Northern Virginia between Annandale and Alexandria. This lovely park has many large azaleas and rhododendrons as well as many spring wildflowers and flowering trees. It is a great learning center for schoolchildren as well as gardeners from the surrounding area.

### Dave and Sharon Raden Garden

After lunch we will stop at **Dave and Sharon Raden's** beautiful one-and-a-half acre garden. Their wooded property is right off the Beltway but secluded and tranquil. With parkland on two sides and Accotink Creek running through it, sights may also include deer, fox, coyote, raccoon, hawks, herons, snapping turtles and other local wildlife. The Radens moved to this picturesque spot almost 15 years ago and brought more than 800 azaleas and rhododendron with them. With yearly additions since then, there are more than 2,000 plants and 1,200 varieties of azalea and rhododendron.

### Carolyn and Paul Beck Garden

The Beck garden is situated at the edge of a well-established development against a backdrop of wooded parkland. Initially the emphasis was almost exclusively on azaleas. Over time a more eclectic approach was taken by **Carolyn and Paul** to include flowering trees and shrubs, dwarf conifers and maples, perennials, hostas, and ferns. In most instances, only one of each cultivar was acquired to allow for as much diversity as possible. Azaleas still make up the biggest portion of the plantings with a wide variety of hybrid groups that cover bloom times from early April through June. The hybrids of Bob Stewart and Pete Vines are well represented. The addition of a water feature and other landscape design elements enhance the overall effect.

### Sunday Banquet Program

We return to the Crowne Plaza in time for a rest, a cash bar social and the plant sale, but be sure you are in the ban-

▼ An unnamed Holly Springs hybrid in the Beck garden.



quet room before 6:30 p.m., since we will be staging a short but very entertaining auction. The banquet begins at 7 p.m. in the same room followed by our evening speakers, **Rosalie Nachman** and **Don Hyatt**. We will conclude with the annual meeting.

**Rosalie Nachman** is a life-long gardener and past ASA board member. She has also served on the Board of the Middle Atlantic Chapter of the ARS and is well known in Henrico County for her expertise.

Her talk this evening will be "Advice to the Lovelorn Azalea Nut." One of the grand ladies of the ASA, Rosalie will combine her expert gardening advice with her delightful sense of humor as she shares mistakes and successes over many years while developing her private garden in Richmond, Virginia. Be prepared to laugh and learn in this memorable presentation.

Our keynote speaker is **Don Hyatt**. Don holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Horticulture and a Masters degree in Computer Science, both from Virginia Tech. Although professionally a public school math and computer science teacher his entire career, Don has maintained a life-long interest in gardening and plants of all kinds. He has served on the ASA Board and is a recipient of the ARS Silver Medal.

Don's talk is titled "Celebrating the Evergreen Azalea." This multi-media presentation celebrates the beauty and diversity of the evergreen azalea. Beginning with a brief history of this long-cherished flowering shrub, he will discuss some of the contributions of pioneers in the field like Joe Gable, Ben Morrison, John Creech, August Kehr and others before acknowledging some of the more recent and stunning accomplishments of our modern hybridizers including many here in Northern Virginia. He will then challenge us to look to the future so we can tap the full potential of the amazing evergreen azalea.

### Annual Meeting

A brief membership meeting following the speakers will include the ASA awards ceremony and the election of new Society officers for the upcoming year.

### Monday, May 4

The final plant sale takes place from 8:30 to 10 a.m. Monday morning. A Board meeting also takes place from 7 to 8:30 a.m., with a hybridizer's roundtable from 8:30 to 10 a.m.

For those who wish to remain in the area for a while, there are major attractions, including the National Arboretum and Mount Vernon in the metropolitan area, and some of our local gardens will also be open for informal tours. More information on these attractions and directions will be posted on the 2009 ASA Convention link on the Azalea Society of America web site ([www.azaleas.org](http://www.azaleas.org)), and will also be available during convention registration.

# Chapter News

## Ben Morrison

*Harold Belcher, President*

**Norman** and **Jean Beaudry** presented a slide presentation detailing the 20-year evolution of their garden at the Chapter's October 19 meeting. They have an extensive collection of azaleas, rhododendrons and companion plants.

**Don Hyatt** presented a preview of the upcoming ASA convention which is being held in Northern Virginia in May.

## Northern Virginia

*Eve Harrison, President*

Amol Kaikini from the Fairfax County Master Gardeners Association was the guest speaker at September's Chapter meeting. He spoke about Integrated Pest Management (IPM) for azaleas and rhododendrons. He is a highly experienced Master Gardener who has extensive knowledge of organic gardening practices.

## Oconee

*Ruth Mellon, Secretary*

The summer meeting of the Oconee Chapter was held June 14 in **Joe Coleman's** garden. It was a joint cutting party held with the Azalea Chapter of the American Rhododendron Society. About 12 members from the two groups attended the event. Joe gave several private one-on-one tips on his method of propagation as well as a tour of his greenhouse.

Attendees also enjoyed a visit from ASA President **John Brown**.

## Vaseyi

*John Brown, Secretary*

The September Chapter meeting was attended by 16 members including one new (old) re-joining member, **Susanne Brown**. The Chapter voted to fund one-half of the proposed signage project at the North Carolina Arboretum at Asheville provided the Southeastern Chapter of the ARS agrees to fund the other half.

A short report from the Vaseyi Chapter Awards Committee asked the membership for input on the name for the chapter award. Reference was made to the Brookside Gardens Frederic. P. Lee Award. Choices include The (Dr.) Augie (or August) Kehr Award, The Fred Galle Award, and the (Dr.) George Vasey Award. The Committee will try to sort out the discussion and include it in the report at the chapter's annual meeting in November.

A group discussion followed on the subject of gardening in the absence of water due to current watering restrictions. Many innovative ideas were shared for recycling water and keeping plants alive.