

Azalea City News

Tyler celebrates annual azalea trail

By JoAnn Smith

Tyler celebrated 50 years of Blooms and Belles with "Behind the Garden Gate" tour of seven gardens March 28.

The tour, opened to the public for the first time, included private gardens displaying azaleas of the major hybrid groups.

Feature lecturer **Buddy Lee**, past president of the Azalea Society of America (ASA) and a noted azalea expert, said "Tyler has lots of petal power with extremely brilliant azalea colors. The dogwood trees, in combination with azaleas, made a spectacular show, and the gardens were well-designed and manicured.

"The Southern Belles (Tyler Junior College group) along with area garden club docents and the hospitality made the entire tour attractive."

Lee presented a historical lecture entitled "Azaleas: Their Journey to East Texas." Other activities included a tour of the Ina Brundrett Azalea Garden on the Tyler Junior College campus and a reception hosted by Mitch Andrews of the ASA Texas Chapter.

Justin Turner, vice-president of the Tyler Convention Visitor Bureau, said approximately 1,500 tickets were issued for the tour.

▼ Home of Sheryl Rogers Palmer, Tyler, Texas



Photo: Tyler Convention & Visitors Bureau

How to be recognized as an Azalea City

One of the principal goals of the Azalea Society of America is to promote the appreciation of azaleas in public and private landscapes. To help achieve that goal, we put an Azalea City program into place in early 2004 to find, recognize, and certify those municipalities that promote and display azaleas as Azalea Society of America Azalea Cities.

We invite you to explore the requirements to be recognized and certified as an official Azalea City. In general, successful applicants for Azalea City status will have shown a dedication to highlighting azaleas through proclamations for an Azalea Week, festivals, tours, and the prominent display of azaleas in public gardens and landscapes.

When you become certified as an Azalea City:

- we will provide you with a news release package appropriate for local media;
- an Azalea Society member will present your representatives with an official certificate suitable for hanging in a prominent location; and
- we will document your certification as an Azalea City in our quarterly journal, *The Azalean*.

You could reasonably expect the certification and accompanying publicity to result in increased tourism. The certification period is for five years, contingent upon a continuing azalea emphasis in your municipality. At this time, there is no fee for application and certification as an Azalea City.

The ASA welcomes all municipalities to apply for official designation as an Azalea City. To aid your municipality with the application, please carefully read the guidelines before filling out the application. While we do want you to receive our official designation as an Azalea City, we have certain requirements to qualify. Since we wish any municipality receiving our Azalea City designation to consider it a distinct honor and recognition by a national association, we bestow that designation only after careful consideration of your application.

For complete guidelines, including an application form, visit the ASA web site at: www.azaleas.org.

Certified Azalea Cities

Nacogdoches, Texas	September 23, 2004
McComb, Mississippi	March 28, 2005
South Gate, California	October 26, 2006
Tyler, Texas	December 10, 2006
Palatka, Florida	December 11, 2006
Houston, Texas	December 12, 2006
Valdosta, Georgia	March 10, 2007