

President's Letter

Aaron Cook — Valdese, North Carolina



It has been a busy summer for me, and I am sure many of you have experienced the same. I would love to hear about everyone's garden, as well as their successes and failures. But let me tell you about my garden. First and foremost, it is not my garden. It is a collaborative effort involving many people. The garden is spread over a vast geographic region covering many hardiness zones and microclimates.

Currently the garden contains 11 different azalea beds with more than 650 unique varieties. But as any good gardener knows, there is always room for another bed.

One of the beds is located in the extreme southern portion of the garden and is filled with an amazing collection of varieties. These varieties flourish in spite of hurricanes, occasional cold winters, and oil spills. A couple of award winners in this bed are the cultivars **Buddy Lee**, **Margie Jenkins**, and **John Thornton**.

In another more northern area of the garden is a bed composed of red Georgia clay. In spite of the tough growing conditions and climate, this bed contains many award winning cultivars as well. Two specimens stand out, **Dr. Joe Coleman** and **Donna Coleman**.

As we continue to move farther north the terrain of our garden takes on a decidedly cooler aspect. Here we have some of the wilder specimens and a more naturalistic style. This is one of my favorite areas of the garden, and I tend to spend more time hanging out here. There are a couple of award winners in this bed as well, **Bob Stelloh** and **Ed Collins**.

Moving even farther north we come to an area where we have several well established beds. In fact these are some of the first beds established in this garden. Although these beds share a common soil type and climate, they are quite distinct. In these beds we find many award winners: **Don Voss**, **Bob Hobbs**, **Bee Hobbs**, **Bill Miller**, **Donald Hyatt**, **Phil Louer**, **Frances Louer**, **Jane Newman**, and **Bob Stewart** just to name a few.

So "how does your garden grow?" Are our beds well tended? Are we providing good growing conditions as a Society to ensure that our garden continues to grow and thrive? Are we cultivating the next crop of award winners? For as surely as a garden requires tending, so does a gardening society.

We are fortunate that our Azalea Society garden is filled with members that are analogous to iron-clad good doers when we compare them to plants in our home garden. They tend to shed adversity and thrive in spite of harsh conditions. We just don't have a lot of tender, finicky members in our Azalea Society garden. They are a diverse group, well suited to the constantly changing Society membership environment. I am always surprised by their amazing strength and productivity.

Have you ever noticed how adding new plants affects the whole garden? The same is true for the Azalea Society. Every new member we add changes the complexion of our Society garden. Good gardening to all!

The Azalea Society of America, organized December 9, 1977 and incorporated in the District of Columbia, is an educational and scientific non-profit association devoted to the culture, propagation, and appreciation of azaleas which are in the subgenera *Tsutsusi* and *Pentanthera* of the genus *Rhododendron* in the Heath family (*Ericaceae*).

Officers for 2010-2011

President — Aaron Cook
Vice President — John Migas
Secretary — Carol Flowers
Treasurer — Dan Krabill
Immediate Past President — John Brown

Directors

Terms expire 2011	Terms expire 2011
Dr. Joe Coleman	Jim Campbell
Eugene Stano, Jr.	Vincent Ciolino
Dave Nanney	J Jackson

Chapter presidents
serve as ex-officio directors.

Chapters

Brookside Gardens (chartered Aug. 1979) William C. Miller III, <i>Pres.</i>	Ben Morrison (chartered May 1980) Harold Belcher, <i>Pres.</i>
Northern Virginia (chartered May 1980) Eve Harrison, <i>Pres.</i>	Louisiana (chartered June 1981) Dr. Allen Owings, <i>Pres.</i>
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Southern California (chartered March 2007) Jim Jaeger, <i>Pres.</i>	

Regular membership is open to all interested parties for an annual amount of \$25; life-membership for one or two persons at the same address is \$500. Members receive *The Azalean* and are eligible for participation in all activities of the Society including those of the chapter with which the member affiliates. For information and a membership application, write to Carol Flowers, Secretary, 700 New Hampshire NW, Apt. 1011, Washington, DC 20037 or visit www.azaleas.org.