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The Azalean

Journal of the Azalea Society of America



President's Letter

John Migas — Saugatuck, Michigan



It's hard to believe the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays are just days away. Local stores have been setting up Christmas items in the front of the entrances for weeks now. What about turkeys and Thanksgiving Day? It seems they went from Halloween straight through to Christmas. Oh well, it must be a money thing.

Just a few weeks ago my 'Lemon Lights' were in bloom. Now, our nights are in the 20s; frosty mornings have returned; the grass stays wet until two in the afternoon; and cold, windy, rainy days have replaced the sun which has been gone for weeks. It's just the way November has always been, and it's just the beginning.

But the change in weather hasn't slowed me down one bit. I have thousands of azalea seedlings to be potted; leaves to be raked; seed to be collected; firewood to be cut, split, and stacked; plants to be dug; customers who want to be attended to "now" (not tomorrow); and greenhouses that need to be covered with plastic. Oh, I forgot, I have to build new ones since the old ones were knocked down by last year's snow. What else can I add to the list? Oh yeah, our usual 100 inches of snow to be shoveled.

To be honest, the summer went by extremely fast. I was very fortunate to keep myself extremely busy throughout the year. Spring was beautiful this year. Here in Michigan, our blooms start in late April with the early-blooming lepidote rhododendrons along with all the spring bulbs and ending with the late-blooming native azaleas *cumberlandense*, *prunifolium* and *arborescens* along with the *maximum* rhododendrons in August.

Switching gears to Society business, our editor Pam Fitch has decided to resign. Her service to the ASA has been greatly appreciated and we will all miss her dearly.

The Harding Garden Memorial will begin construction soon, and the ASA Board approved a one-time donation for its use.

Members are working to get the Alabamense Chapter back up and running, with a meeting to elect new officers scheduled for this fall season.

Friends of the National Arboretum must not be forgotten. Donations for the cause will be greatly appreciated. Check out the Web site www.savetheazaleas.org for more information.

Last but not least, registration for the 2012 ASA convention in Asheville, North Carolina is well on its way. The word is out, register early. Rooms are filling up so hurry!

For now, I'm going to try to slow down and enjoy the upcoming holidays and try to visit some friends. Let it snow.....

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*).

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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.

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contents

VOLUME 33

NUMBER 3

FALL 2011

Features

52 Appalachian Spring 2012: A visit among the Blue Ridge Mountains

Bob Stelloh

59 Magnolia Plantation Gets USNA Cuttings

60 Funding Update: "Save the Azaleas" Campaign

Harold Belcher

65 2011 Evansville Convention Wrap Up—Azaleas and Other Interests, Challenging Weather—Still a Great Convention

Carol Flowers

Society News

50 President's Letter

61 Society News

63 Chapter News

64 New Members



On the Cover

Yellow deciduous azalea photographed at Azalea Path Arboretum and Botanical Garden. Please see related article on page 65.

Photo Barbara Stump

Appalachian Spring 2012: A Visit among the Blue Ridge Mountains

Bob Stelloh—Hendersonville, NC



The Vaseyi Chapter of the Azalea Society of America and the Southeastern Chapter of the American Rhododendron Society invite you to experience Appalachian Spring 2012, the joint international convention of the ASA and ARS, May 4 - May 7, 2012, in Asheville, North Carolina. This is peak bloom time for azaleas and rhododendrons in the Asheville area, so be prepared to see a lot of flowers!

We welcome you to be a part of this exciting joint convention. First, register online or fill out the convention registration form and mail it before March 1, 2012, to get the early registration discount. Be sure to let us know any special dietary needs, and be sure to note both your ARS membership and ASA membership if you belong to both societies.

Then, make your hotel reservation. Our headquarters is the Crowne Plaza Resort, One Resort Drive, Asheville, NC 28806. It is a recently renovated tennis and golf resort hotel located on 125 acres one mile west of downtown Asheville, with free parking and free shuttle service to Asheville. Reserve your room online or call 888-233-9527 before April 30, 2012 and say your reservation is for the American Rhododendron Society Convention to get the reduced rates starting at \$99—do it now; rooms are limited and no other hotel is within walking distance.

Finally, figure out how to get here. Either fly to the Asheville airport 10 miles away (a hotel shuttle bus is available with advance notice for \$20 each or \$50 for up to 6 persons), or fly to the Greenville-Spartanburg airport 75 miles away; or drive a long day trip from Chicago, Washington D.C., Florida, New Orleans, East Texas, or St. Louis.

We hope you will bring some of your trusses and sprays to enter in the flower show, and bring some of your flower pictures to enter in the photo contest. You can download copies of the rules for the shows online from the Azalea Society Web site, or request them on the registration form. You can submit your entries on Thursday and Friday afternoons, and the shows will be open for viewing starting Friday evening.

Asheville is the largest city in western North Carolina, with a population of around 85,000. It is an interesting city to visit, with winding hilly streets and historic Art Deco architectural gems, hundreds of arts and crafts galleries and communities, lots of great restaurants, outdoor recreational opportunities, and a variety of entertainment and night life. Called the “Paris of the South,” it has made a number of “top 10” lists: one of the “10 Most Beautiful Places in America” (*Good Morning America*, 2011); the “Happiest City for

Women” (*Self* magazine, 2002); one of the world’s top 12 must-see destinations and one of the top seven places to live in the U.S. (*Frommer’s* travel guides, 2007); and one of the “Best Places to Reinvent Your Life” (*AARP* magazine, 2003). Be careful: many people who visit Asheville come back again—and again—and end up moving here! You may see why when you visit. You’re coming at a perfect time: at 2200’ elevation, Asheville in early May averages 50°F in the evening, and 70°F during the day.

Friday, May 4 Convention Opening

The convention opens on Friday, May 4, with the ARS Board meeting at 9 a.m. and the ASA Board meeting at 1 p.m. For the rest of us, the registration desk opens at noon, the plant sale opens at 3 p.m., and a welcome reception begins at 4 p.m. (don’t miss this—there will be lots of appetizers, enough to call it dinner, along with a cash bar and live music). Plan to arrive early, so you can be settled in before the welcome reception. Better yet, plan to arrive a few days early or stay a few days later to enjoy some of the many pre- and post-convention on-your-own tours we have suggested for you.

Opening remarks begin at 7 p.m., followed by Don Hyatt setting the tone of the convention with his presentation on “Chasing the Bloom.” He will focus on the rich botanical diversity of the Southern Appalachian Mountains and scenic locations along the Blue Ridge Parkway. As is Don’s typical presentation style, expect an entertaining and fast-paced program filled with many beautiful images, occasional touches of humor, and a few digital tricks, too. With a Bachelor of Science degree in horticulture and a Master of Science degree in Computer Science, both from Virginia Tech, he has maintained a keen interest in gardening and plants since he was a toddler.

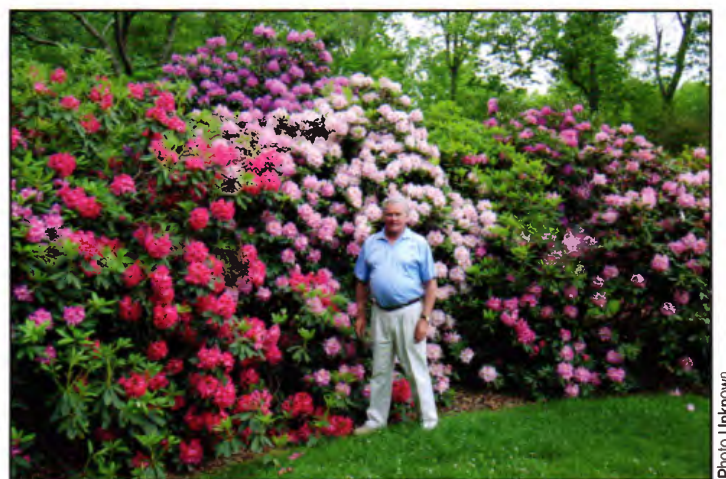
The registration desk and the flower show, photo contest, and plant sale will be open for a few hours after the talks.

Early Bird Tour

To the first 100 guests able to tour on Friday morning, we offer an early-bird pre-convention tour of the Biltmore Estate house and gardens. The Biltmore house, with 250 rooms and four acres of floor space, is the largest single-family house in America, and is nestled within 8,000 acres of forest and gardens designed by Frederick Law Olmsted.



▲ Biltmore House



▲ Charles Dexter Owen, Jr. and Dexter Rhododendrons

After leaving the hotel at 9 a.m., you will be dropped off at the entrance to the Shrub Garden to ramble. From there you will take a self-guided tour through the Shrub Garden, Spring Garden, Walled Garden, and Conservatory, ultimately arriving at the Azalea Garden to admire the extensive collection of azaleas and other unique plants. The lower part of this garden contains magnificent examples of Dawn Redwood (*Metasequoia glyptostroboides*), China Fir (*Cunninghamia lanceolata*), Katsura tree (*Cercidiphyllum japonicum*), and Bigleaf Magnolia (*Magnolia macrophylla*).

Planted under the trees is an equally interesting shrub layer. Look for the rare *Disanthus cercidifolius* peeking out from under the hydrangeas and tree-like *Cephalotaxus*. Other plants of interest are the large Stinking Cedars (*Torreya taxifolia*), a very large Persian Ironwood (*Parrotia persica*), and Cut Leaf European Beech (*Fagus sylvatica* 'Asplenifolia'). It is worth noting that Dr. Michael Dirr made an annual pilgrimage with students to the estate while teaching at UGA. Of the more than 325 genera listed in his *Manual of Woody Landscape Plants*, almost 200 are represented in these gardens.

After visiting the gardens, you are welcome to tour the "largest single family home in America." Expect to spend about 90 minutes in the house. Lunch at any of a number of restaurants, with the Stable Cafe and Courtyard Market being the closest, just to the right of the house. Be back at the Shrub Garden by 2:30 p.m. for a ride back to the Crowne Plaza Resort on the tour bus.

Saturday, May 5

The Flower Show and Photo Contest will be open to the public all day from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Saturday Tour

The Saturday tour price includes a hot buffet breakfast starting at 6:30 a.m. and a fine lunch during the tour. We will board the buses by 8 a.m. and return by 4 p.m.

Charles Dexter Owen Garden

This fabulous garden belonging to Charles Dexter Owen, Jr. is in Biltmore Forest, near the Biltmore Estate in Asheville. This 3-1/2 acre property with more than 40 varieties

of rhododendrons has the largest collection of Dexter hybrid rhododendrons in the South, exceeded only by the original Dexter garden on Cape Cod, which provided the plants "by fully loaded box cars." Many are original plants from his great grandfather's nephew, Charles Owen Dexter, hybridizer of the Dexter rhododendrons at Heritage Museum and Gardens on Cape Cod.

The house, built in 1936, is located on the back third of the property with a full wall of rhododendrons cascading over a 50-foot long brick wall on the parking area. The front terrace of the house looks out onto a huge outdoor "room" surrounded by a five-foot holly hedge. Perennial beds in each corner soften the view. Beyond the hedge are newer plantings of native azaleas, a recent interest of the current owner, 'Charlie' Owen. Total privacy is maintained in the garden by 60-foot trees around three sides of the property. On the street side, scattered trees remain with rhododendrons throughout. Only the side of the house is visible from the street.

North Carolina Arboretum at Asheville

Located within the Bent Creek Experimental Forest of the Pisgah National Forest a few minutes south of Asheville, the 434-acre arboretum property encompasses 65 acres of cultivated gardens and 10 miles of forested hiking/biking trails.

The garden themes reflect the cultural and natural heritage of the Southern Appalachians to help people understand the role of plants in their lives. Several gardens you may see during your visit include: the Quilt Garden with colorful raised beds designed after traditional quilt patterns; the Heritage Garden featuring plants used in traditional folk medicine and crafts of the Appalachians; the Bonsai Exhibition Garden showcasing one of the best collections of bonsai in the southeastern United States, with special emphasis on native plants; and the Canopy Garden, which includes 75 unnamed Dexter hybrids given by Charles Dexter Owen, Jr.

Most importantly to us, the Arboretum is home to the National Native Azalea Collection, approximately 8 acres in size. This garden was established to maintain a germplasm collection of azalea species native to the United States, and to interpret the diversity and value of native azaleas and their companion plants. The collection currently holds more than



▲ Entry sign to National Native Azalea Collection

► *R. vaseyi*, *R. minus* var. *carolinianum*

100 accessions of 16 of the 17 azalea species native to the U.S., and some of their named selections and hybrids.

Blue Ridge Parkway

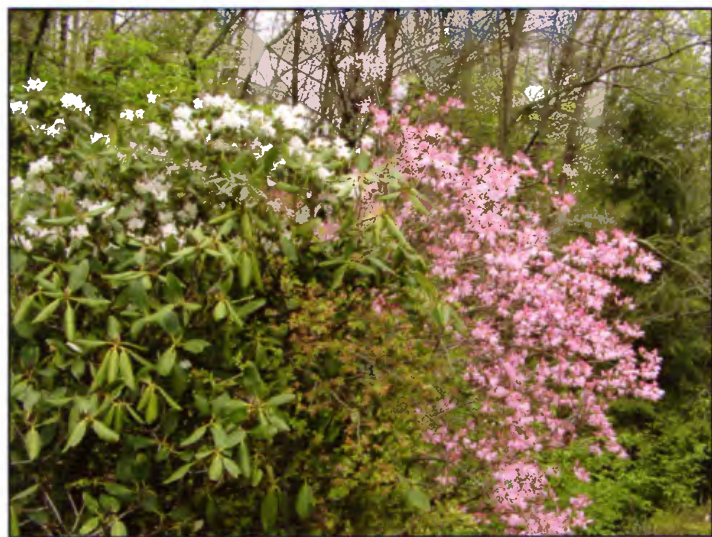
We will tour the Blue Ridge Parkway to view wildflowers, azaleas, and rhododendrons in the wild. We will start at milepost 393 at the North Carolina Arboretum entrance, and may get as far as milepost 423 at NC Hwy 215 before returning.

Although some of the native azalea and rhododendron species will not be in bloom in early May, we should be seeing *R. vaseyi* and *R. minus* var. *carolinianum*—at least they were blooming on May 1, 2002 at milepost 416.9 near the Looking Glass overlook, 4492' elevation, as shown in the picture.

Saturday Evening

We have a full afternoon and evening of events planned after we return from the tours at 4 p.m., starting with the plant sale being open for a few hours.

Marianne and Bruce Feller will lead a flower-show judging workshop at 4:30 pm for those who want to learn what



a judge looks for when awarding ribbons, as well as those contemplating a future role as a flower-show judge. This will be a "walk-through discussion" of the flower show after the entries have been judged, to discuss the selection, grooming, and preparation of trusses and sprays, their presentation and other factors bearing on the process of evaluating entries. The Fellers have organized and conducted the flower shows for the New York Chapter for the past 10 years, as well as

participating as exhibitors, with numerous awards to their credit, in flower shows held by many ARS Chapters—including Greater Philadelphia, Massachusetts, Middle Atlantic, and Princeton.

There will also be a hybridizers' roundtable at 4:30 p.m. Attend this popular discussion group if you have any interest at all in hybridizing. It may be formal or informal, with prepared remarks or free-flowing discussion of topics relating to hybridizing, depending upon who is in attendance.

Saturday evening is the American Rhododendron Society Banquet and Annual Meeting with everyone invited, starting at 6 p.m. with a social hour and cash bar. After the banquet, annual meeting and awards, we will have a presentation entitled "From Mountain to Plain: Niagara's Program for Evaluating Cold-Hardy Rhodies in Diverse Locales" by Christina Woodward and Nick Yarmoshuk. Christina, the late Dr. Joseph Brueckner's daughter, is curator of her father's studbooks and more than 500 of his hybrids in Mississauga, Ontario. She will describe his breeding program and the resulting plants, which are the subject of the evaluation program.

Nick is Secretary of the Niagara Region Chapter of ARS District 12, Chair of the ARS Test and Demonstration Garden Committee, and past president of the NRC and the Rhododendron Society of Canada. He will share with us the Brueckner Evaluation Program rationale, design, and implementation.

The plant sale, flower show and photo contest will then be open for several more hours following the presentation.

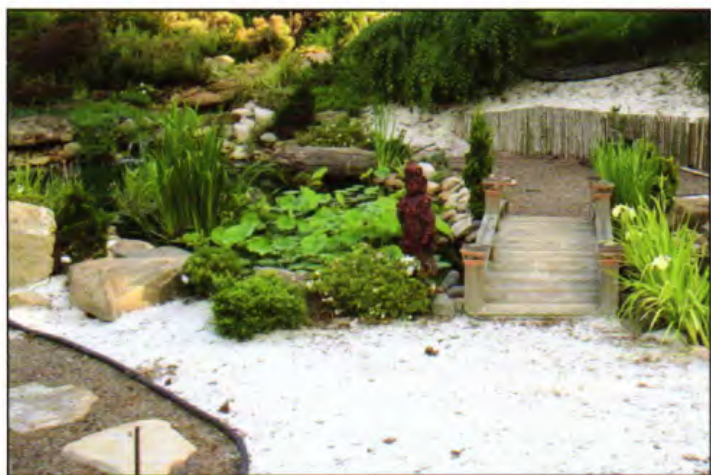
Sunday, May 6—Tour

The tour price includes a hot buffet breakfast starting at 6:30 a.m., and a fine catered barbecue lunch at Camp Green Cove. We will board the buses by 8 a.m. sharp and return by 4 p.m.

Grist Gardens—A Tout le Monde (For All the World)

The Grist Gardens have served as a refuge and pet project since 1979 for Dr. Marilyn Grist, a practicing veterinarian for more than 30 years. The nine-acre garden is nestled between Greenville, South Carolina, and Asheville, North Carolina, in the sleepy little town of Travelers Rest.

▼ Grist Japanese Garden



Dr. Grist chose to convey her love for her family by building a special, individualized garden based on their personalities and dedicated to each of her four children and two grandchildren. Dr. Grist also created a Japanese Garden, Charleston Garden, formal orchard, and Victorian Rose Garden. The Japanese Garden features conifers, waterfalls, and a pagoda. The Charleston Gardens contain a gazebo, hollies, and roses. Throughout the property are varieties of azaleas, rhododendrons, shrubs, and trees—a truly unique and stunning collection. As a final touch, the North Saluda River bubbles by on the northern portion of the property, providing a calming place to rest.

Mary and Ed Collins Garden

Six years ago Mary and Ed Collins purchased the Charlie and Ethel Larus property in Flat Rock, North Carolina, and moved 3 miles away to a beautifully established garden located on seven-plus acres with two streams. Charlie had eclectic tastes with a special interest in dwarf plants. As a result, the garden had a large and densely planted collection of dwarf indumented rhododendrons, evergreen azaleas, deciduous azaleas, dwarf conifers, and a large number of perennials, wildflowers, and unusual trees and shrubs.

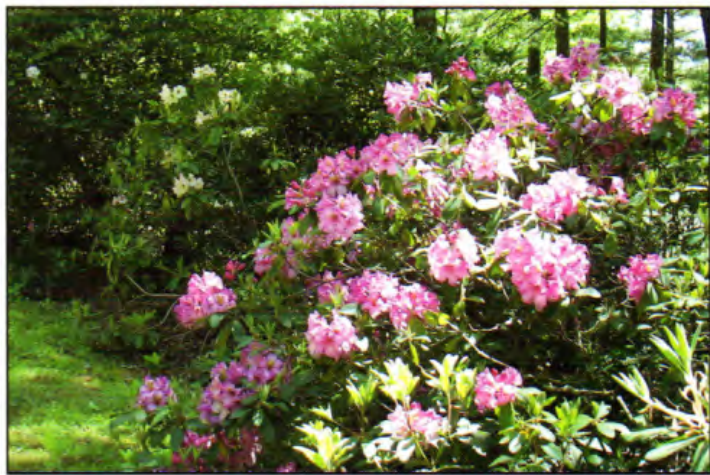
The Collins are still in the process of incorporating more than a thousand plants from their previous garden into the landscape, by opening up an additional two acres to display their Cowles hybrid rhododendrons and many deciduous azaleas, and revamping the existing dense plantings by selectively transplanting to that new area.

James and Mary Ann Stewart Garden

Eight years ago the Stewarts obtained the fabulous garden developed by Dr. August "Augie" Kehr during the previous 24 years. It is located adjacent to the Collins garden, to give us two gardens for one stop. The property encompasses some 10-plus acres with two streams. The back part of the property is the meadow Augie used for his later magnolia hybridization work, and has what may be the largest collection of magnolias in the United States.

The upper garden has a very large collection of azalea and rhododendron hybrids, many of them developed by Augie, along with other rare and unusual plants. One of his

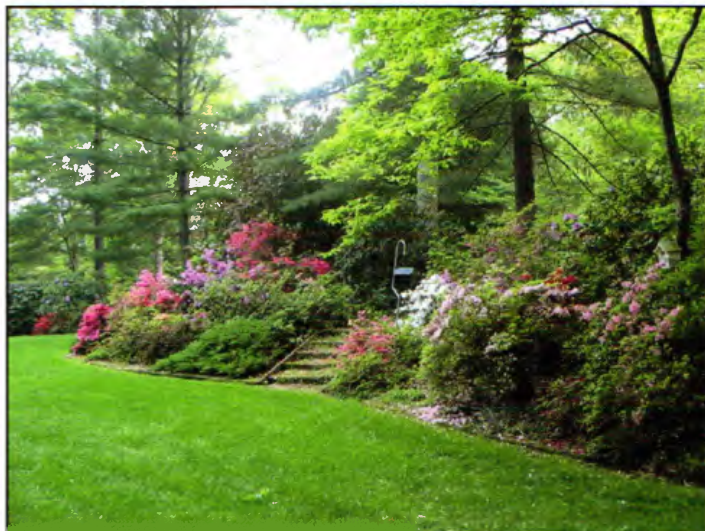
▼ Collins' Rhododendrons





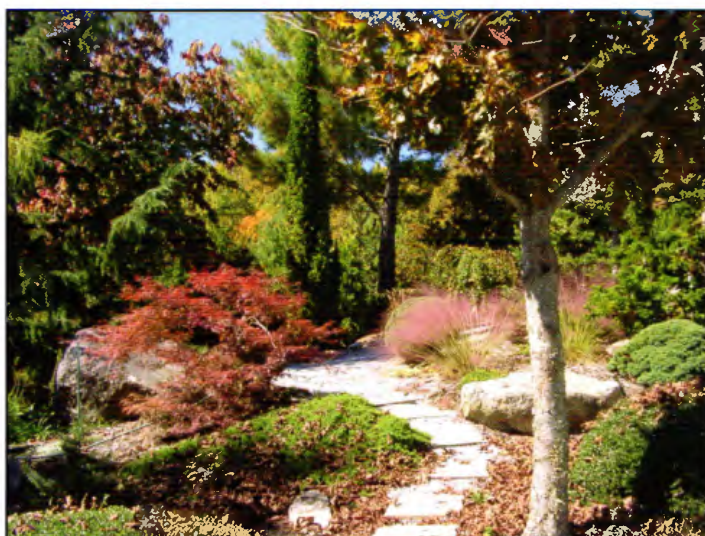
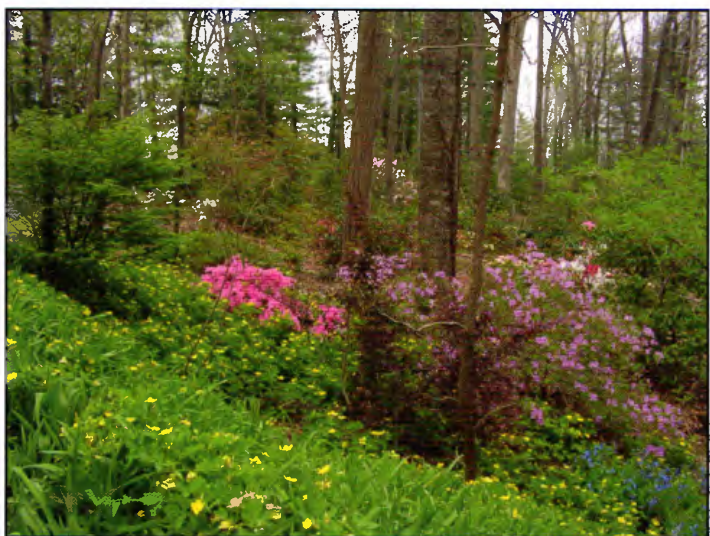
▲ 'Kehr's Moonbeam'

▼ Stelloh Garden



▲ Bell Garden

▼ Richards Garden



goals was the development of a good yellow evergreen azalea using various propagation methods. Although he never reached this goal, about a dozen azaleas in the garden are the result of this effort, and his best, 'Kehr's Moonbeam', is being marketed in California.

Audrey and Bob Stelloh Garden

This wonderful woodland tapestry was begun in 1996 by Bob and his late wife Denise. They moved 600 favorite plants from their old garden near Washington, D.C., to a hilly two-acre site with many native wildflowers, mountain laurels, *R. maximum*, and a few native azaleas—all under mature oaks, tulip poplars, pines, and sourwoods. Now, thousands of choice azaleas and rhododendrons will be in full glory, along with trillium, lady's slipper, bloodroot, anemone, tiarella, primrose, fern varieties, hellebore, hosta, astilbe, arisaema, solomon's seal, pulmonaria, saxifraga, Virginia bluebell, wood poppy, and other companion plants. There are also many different varieties of Japanese maples, camellias, stewartias, conifers, and other ornamental trees.

Bob and his new wife Audrey have been actively renovating their enchanting woodland garden, named Kairaku

(Joint Pleasure), and welcome you to share and enjoy it with them as you wander along its winding paths.

Lunch at Camp Greencove

The Carolinas are noted for their fine barbecue. We will sample it with a sit-down barbecue lunch at Camp Green Cove, itself an example of another fine Carolina tradition: summer camps for children.

Sunday Evening

We again have a full afternoon and evening of events planned after we return from the tours at 4 p.m., starting with the plant sale being open for a few hours.

Laura Grant, the ARS Executive Director, will lead a free-ranging discussion forum from 4:30 to 6 p.m. with a primary focus on the ARS.

Sunday evening is the Azalea Society Banquet and Annual Meeting, with everyone invited, starting with a short social hour and cash bar at 6 p.m. Following the banquet and meeting will be a live auction at 8 p.m. and a presentation entitled "Trekking through Swarms of Azaleas and Double Helices." Dr. Thomas Ranney and two of his graduate stu-



Photo Bob Steloh

▲ Sargent's Hemlock



Photo WhiteGate Inn

▲ WhiteGate Inn

dents, Kimberly Shearer and Jason Lattier, will review two research projects that study the role of hybridization and polyploidy (multiple sets of chromosomes) in plant evolution:

- How the unique azaleas found on Gregory and Wayah Balds in the Appalachian Mountains evolved from complex hybridization among multiple native species including *R. arborescens*, *R. cumberlandense*, *R. viscosum*, and *R. calendulaceum*;
- Is *R. canadense* really a tetraploid species as commonly thought? A new survey suggests otherwise. Science aside, many of these species and their hybrids provide fantastic garden plants. Enjoy the diversity.

With a Ph.D. from Cornell University, Tom is a professor of horticultural science for North Carolina State University. He lives, works, and plays in the mountains of western North Carolina, where he is program leader of the Mountain Crop Improvement Lab of the Mountain Horticultural Crops Research and Extension Center in Mills River, North Carolina.

The plant sale will be open for a few hours following the presentation.

Monday, May 7

For most of us, it is time to say our goodbyes until next year. To ease the pain of separation, the plant sale opens for a few hours starting at 8 a.m. to let you load up with still more plants. The new Azalea Society board will also have a short meeting starting at 8 a.m.

Bonus Tour

If you can stay in town for another day we offer a post-convention bonus tour of more gardens for you to visit. It includes a hot breakfast buffet, lunch, and an all-day tour of gardens in Asheville and Hendersonville. We will board the buses by 9 a.m. sharp and return by 5 p.m.

Melody and Doley Bell Garden

The Bell garden began in the 1970s as a retirement venture for former educators David and Naoma Dean. Following David's death, Naoma married Dr. Allen Clague and they continued improving and maintaining the garden. In June of 2000 Doley and Melody Bell became stewards of the garden and have been continually upgrading it since then.

This remarkable garden includes formal areas and woodland areas, and has an estimated 3,000 mature rhododendrons and azaleas including Dexter, Haag, Leach, Kehr, Gilkey, Delp, Van Veen, Richardson, and Lee hybrid rhododendrons, and Glenn Dale, Back Acres, Exbury, and Girard hybrid azaleas, along with many native azaleas. Special plants include flowering peaches, crab apples, hybrid dogwoods, hybrid laurels, *Franklinia*, *Cunninghamia*, camellias, dawn redwood, *Enkianthus*, *Pieris*, and Japanese maples.

Hazel and Byron Richards Garden

In 1988, the Richards began building their home, and a few years later began their magnificent three-acre garden. Fascination with conifers led to 30 years membership and a national directorship in The American Conifer Society. Though conifers may be their signature plant, they have many others of interest as well. Initially they enjoyed the many native plants on their property including mountain laurel, flame azaleas, rhododendron, and large oaks and pines. They have complemented those plants with 200-300 conifers, 23 cultivars of beech (*Fagus*) from A to Z, and many hostas and Japanese maples. Certain plants such as *Microbiota decussata* (Russian juniper), *Abies*, *Chamaecyparis*, *Cryptomeria*, *Tsuga*, *Taxus*, *Pinus*, along with berries and fruit trees, help make an eclectic garden.

They enjoyed the challenge of building a koi pond in 1998. The 70 x 90 foot lined pond is up to 12-feet deep and supports a submerged *Taxodium ascendens* (pond cypress) and an *Acer palmatum* 'Waterfall'. Everything on the property has been accomplished by the two of them. Gardens are always changing and they have enjoyed growing old with their plants—as Hazel has said “We move our plants like we move our furniture.”

Bullington Horticultural Center

The Bullington Center, once the nursery of Bob Bullington in the early 1970s, is on 12 acres of rolling land. Visitors enjoy the educational gardens which include a therapy garden, shade garden, perennial borders, native woodland garden with a half-mile nature trail, rain garden, a pumpkin patch, and herb garden. These gardens incorporate many unusual now-mature trees that Mr. Bullington introduced, along with a large collection of deciduous azaleas, including a number of Gregory Bald natural hybrid azaleas.

During our visit, Bullington Center volunteers will be our tour guides, and tell us what they do for children, their partnership with the school system, and how the special-needs children plan and plant their own gardens.

WhiteGate Inn

The owner and gardener, Ralph Coffey, will introduce his award-winning gardens of this Asheville inn. The garden rooms have an extensive collection of Japanese maples and unusual small trees, shrubs, and conifers. These include more than 300 different varieties of perennials, hostas, roses and herbs. A greenhouse houses a collection of more than 800 orchids and tropicals. Paths and sitting areas throughout the gardens and along the waterfalls make the grounds a perfect place to wander stress free, or to sit and meditate among nature's beauty and abundance.

These are the only Asheville gardens to have won awards as "Best Water Garden" and as "Best Landscape Garden." They were featured on the National Garden Conservancy tour in 2005, and have been on several local Father's Day tours.

Sponsors

We thank a number of sponsors who have helped with the convention. They include:

- Anonymous
- BB Barns Nursery
- Gardens of the Blue Ridge
- Greer Gardens
- Jesse Israel & Sons Nursery
- Mast General Store
- Timber Press
- Whitney Gardens & Nursery
- Worm's Way

Plant Sale

Each day after the tours, come check out the plant sale. Sold out of the one you want? Check back again, as they are being restocked frequently. No room for plants because you will be flying home? We will have a service to provide packing materials and to ship your plants.

More than 3,000 choice plants are being grown for the plant sale, thanks to the efforts of local chapter members and good friends in eight states. Most of the plants will be 3-1/2" liners, large enough to plant out and grow, yet affordable and convenient to carry more of them home with you. A full list of the plants, many with pictures, is shown on the Azalea Society website.

The theme of the plant sale will be to highlight the collecting and hybridizing efforts of our many local area plantsmen. We have sought and are collecting the works of such notables as James Harris, Velma Haag, Gene Aromi, George Beasley, Tom Dodd, Augie Kehr, James Todd, Ben Morrison, Don Johnson, Lonnie Player, Kelly Strickland, Earl Sommerville, Zophar Warner, and others.

We will also be offering a few other selected items in the plant sale area, including an assortment of garden-related books, some new and some pre-read, all offered at a significant discount from the list price.

Convention Schedule

Thursday, May 3, 2012

- 3 - 6 p.m. Plant and Book Sale Open—Mitchell Room, Biltmore Foyer
- 4 - 6 p.m. Registration Open—Laurel Registration Desk
- 5 - 6 p.m. Flower & Photo Show Entry Submission—Overlook Ballroom
- 6 p.m. Dinner On Your Own—Free Shuttle Buses to Downtown Asheville

Friday, May 4, 2012

- 6:30 - 9 a.m. Breakfast on Your Own—Pro's Table Restaurant
- 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. ARS Board Meeting—Foxfire Room
- 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. Early Bird Tour—Biltmore House and Garden
- 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. Sightseeing on your own—Free Shuttle Buses to Downtown Asheville
- Noon - 1 p.m. Lunch for ARS and ASA Boards—Roan Room
- Noon - 5:30 p.m. Flower & Photo Show Entry Submission—Overlook Ballroom
- Noon - 6 p.m. Registration Open—Laurel Registration Desk
- 1 - 3 p.m. ASA Board Meeting—Dogwood Room
- 3 - 6 p.m. Plant and Book Sale Open—Mitchell Room, Biltmore Foyer
- 4 - 7 p.m. Welcome Reception (heavy appetizers and cash bar)—Roan, Pisgah, Pilot Rooms
- 6 - 7 p.m. Flower & Photo Show Judging—Overlook Ballroom
- 7 - 7:30 p.m. Welcoming Remarks—Roan, Pisgah, Pilot Rooms
- 7:30 - 8:30 p.m. Keynote Speaker Don Hyatt, "Chasing the Bloom"—Roan, Pisgah, Pilot Rooms
- 8:30 - 10 p.m. Registration Open—Laurel Registration Desk
- 8:30 - 10 p.m. Flower & Photo Show Open—Overlook Ballroom
- 8:30 - 10:30 p.m. Plant and Book Sale Open—Mitchell Room, Biltmore Foyer

Saturday, May 5, 2012

- 6:30 - 9 a.m. Breakfast Buffet, included in tour—Roan and other rooms
- 7 - 8 a.m. Registration Open—Laurel Registration Desk
- 8 a.m. - 4 p.m. Tour—Owen, North Carolina Arboretum, Blue Ridge Parkway
- 9 a.m. - 6 p.m. Flower & Photo Show Open—Overlook Ballroom
- 4 - 6 p.m. Plant and Book Sale Open—Mitchell Room, Biltmore Foyer

- 4:30 - 5:30 p.m. Workshop: Flower Show Judging—
Overlook Ballroom
- 4:30 - 6 p.m. Hybridizers Roundtable—Foxfire Room
- 6 - 7 p.m. Social Hour (cash bar)—Roan, Pisgah,
Pilot Rooms
- 7 - 8 p.m. ARS Banquet—Roan, Pisgah, Pilot Rooms
- 8 - 8:30 p.m. ARS Annual Meeting—Roan, Pisgah,
Pilot Rooms
- 8:45 - 9:45 p.m. Presentation "From Mountain to Plain,"
Christina Woodward and Nick Yarmoshuk—
Roan, Pisgah, Pilot Rooms
- 9:45 - 11:15 p.m. Plant and Book Sale Open—Mitchell Room,
Biltmore Foyer
- 9:45 - 11:15 p.m. Flower & Photo Show Open—Overlook Ballroom

Sunday, May 6, 2012

- 6:30 - 9 a.m. Breakfast Buffet, included in tour—
Roan and other rooms
- 8 a.m. - 4 p.m. Tour—Hendersonville: Grist, Collins,
Stewart, Stelloh Gardens
- 4 - 6 p.m. Plant and Book Sale Open—Mitchell Room,
Biltmore Foyer
- 4:30 - 6 p.m. ARS Executive Director Forum—Dogwood Room
- 6 - 6:30 p.m. Social Hour (cash bar)—Roan, Pisgah,
Pilot Rooms
- 6:30-7:30 p.m. ASA Banquet—Roan, Pisgah, Pilot Rooms
- 7:30-8:00 p.m. ASA Annual Meeting—Roan, Pisgah,
Pilot Rooms
- 8 - 8:30 p.m. Auction—Roan, Pisgah, Pilot Rooms
- 8:45 - 9:45 p.m. Presentation "Trekking Through Swarms of
Azaleas," Tom Ranney, Kimberley Shearer, and
Jason Lattier—Roan, Pisgah, Pilot Rooms
- 9:45 - 11:15 p.m. Plant and Book Sale Open—Mitchell Room,
Biltmore Foyer

Monday, May 7, 2012

- 6:30 - 9 a.m. Breakfast Buffet, included in tour—
Roan and other rooms
- 6:30 - 9 a.m. Breakfast on your own if not on tour—
Pro's Table Restaurant
- 8 - 10 a.m. ASA Board Meeting—Dogwood Room
- 8 - 11 a.m. Plant and Book Sale Open—Mitchell Room,
Biltmore Foyer
- 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. Bonus Tour—Bell, Richards, Bullington Center,
White Gate Inn

Magnolia Plantation Gets USNA Cuttings

Over the summer, **Tom Johnson**, director of gardens at Magnolia Plantation in Charleston, South Carolina, and founding member of the Great Gardens of America Preservation Alliance, visited the U.S. National Arboretum along with members of the Rev. J. G. Drayton Chapter of the ASA.

The expedition had a purpose—preserving azaleas. In December 2010, Johnson contacted the arboretum with an unusual request. He wanted to take cuttings from the prized Glenn Dale azalea collection bred by former arboretum Director Ben Morrison in the 1940s. At the time, the azaleas on the southern face of Mount Hamilton were slated for destruction, and Johnson wanted to do what he could to preserve Morrison's work.

In late December, Johnson received approval to take 500 cuttings from the more than 3,000 of Morrison's azaleas still residing at the arboretum. It is believed that Morrison planted as many as 10,000 azaleas during his tenure at the Arboretum, but the majority were lost in the 1980s.

Johnson doesn't want history to repeat itself. He plans to propagate the cuttings in greenhouses at Magnolia Plantation and then distribute the azaleas to 30 other public and private gardens across the United States.

Magnolia Plantation's effort distributing the plants is very important, so all the eggs are not in one basket. A plant is lost forever when it's lost, according to Scott Aker, the Arboretum horticulture director, who proposed destruction of the azaleas.

Meanwhile, a public outcry, coupled with a \$1 million anonymous donation, has saved, for at least a while—the valuable azalea collection on the southern face of Mount Hamilton. However, this doesn't lessen the importance of Johnson's efforts. Plants can be devastated by more than budget cuts. Threats such as insects and disease can also wipe out a species.

"We have learned it's really scary to have one plant in (only) one location," Johnson said in an interview with Charleston's *The Post and Courier*.

Advertise Your Business!

The Azalean is the official journal of the Azalea Society of America, devoted to the culture, propagation and appreciation of azaleas. It is published four times a year (Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter). Each issue is 24 pages, 16 of them in full color. It is mailed to approximately 1,000 dedicated azalea buyers. For more information, visit www.azaleas.org.

Funding Update:

“Save the Azaleas” Campaign

Harold Belcher—Cheverly, Maryland

In May, Friends of the National Arboretum (FONA) invited stakeholders of the U.S. National Arboretum to a meeting updating them on the status of funding of the “Save the Azaleas” campaign.

It was reported that the retail portion of the campaign has raised about \$40,000, mostly through small donations. The Friends of the National Arboretum Board agreed to bear the expenses of the campaign which totaled \$17,000 to date. No fundraising expenses have come out of the funds donated to the campaign.

The \$1 million endowment has produced income of approximately \$28,000. Friends of the National Arboretum now plans to reach out to high income individuals and corporate donors for support. They are confident about reaching their funding goal.

Friends of the National Arboretum has requested assurances from the U.S. National Arboretum that the money provided through the fundraising campaign be used solely for the affected collections. Arboretum staff have said at least \$100,000 per year needs to be provided before that assurance will be given.

Dr. Colein Hefferan, director of the U.S. National Arboretum, spent about an hour answering questions, outlining some of the Arboretum’s current and future projects and providing insight into their efforts to care for and support their collections. She informed us that the Arboretum is not going to de-accession the undocumented azaleas on the Glenn Dale Hillside or the Boxwood and Perennial Collections and is working to maintain its collections for as long as possible. Unfortunately, it appears that the Arboretum will face reduced funding for FY 2012.

Dr. Hefferan opined that fundraising is difficult. The Arboretum needs to generate ideas to further engage the public with U.S. National Arboretum functions, collections, and opportunities. She would like to discuss plans and potential changes to save money, or increase revenues, with stakeholders before decisions are made.

She mentioned that the most visited collections at the Arboretum are: the Azalea Collection, the Bonsai Exhibit, and the Asian Valley. People come to the Arboretum to see what they enjoy.

An ASA representative mentioned that members of the ASA and ARS working with the Curator of the Azalea Collections, could probably identify the undocumented Glenn Dale azaleas given the opportunity. Dr. Hefferan indicated that it may not be necessary to name them (the undocumented Glenn Dale azaleas) in order to appreciate and maintain them.

ASA and ARS members are currently involved with other

arboretums and collections of azaleas and rhododendrons to correct the names of, and correctly identify, plants. These efforts assist in increasing public awareness and opportunities for educational experiences. Dr. Hefferan indicated that the Arboretum would use the \$8,000 that FONA has been keeping since 1992 for signage in the Glenn Dale Collection for that purpose.

At the conclusion of the meeting, the stakeholders expressed a sense that things at the Arboretum seem to be moving in the right direction. Dr. Hefferan appears genuinely interested in working with the stakeholders to solve some of the Arboretum’s problems and to involve stakeholders in the Arboretum’s decision-making process concerning the resolution of those problems.

Harold Belcher began his appreciation for azaleas while working at Dr. Wilbur Engleman’s azalea nursery in Lanham, Maryland, during his high school years (1961 -1964). He graduated from the University of Maryland with a business degree in 1970. Harold worked for the Navy Department and the Department of Justice and retired from Federal government service in January 2009. He is a past four-term president of the Ben Morrison Chapter of the ASA and former ASA board member. Harold has been a resident of Cheverly, Maryland, all his life and has enjoyed visiting the U.S. National Arboretum since 1960.



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E-mail vze1onzd@verizon.net or
mail address changes to:

Carol Flowers, ASA Secretary
700 New Hampshire NW, Apt. 1011
Washington, D.C. 20037

Society News

Brown gets Distinguished Service Award

The Azalea Society of America has an awards program, and during the years has presented awards to our outstanding members who have made major contributions of time and energy to improve the Society. During the Society's national meeting in Evansville, Indiana, outgoing ASA President **Aaron Cook** presented the Distinguished Service Award to **John Brown**.

The award said: "John Brown is an Engineer by profession, but in his heart he is a horticulturist. He has served on the National Board of the Azalea Society of America as Director, Secretary and President. He has been over the Azalea Society Archives and in charge of back issues for the Society for many years. He is a past member of the Flame Chapter and a founding member of the Vaseyi Chapter. As a member of the Vaseyi Chapter, he has served as Secretary and Vice-President. He chaired the plant sale for the 2001, and served as Tour Chair for the 2008 ASA national convention. John is also active in the Southeastern Chapter of the American Rhododendron Society (ARS), where he has served in many capacities both locally and nationally. He was recently honored by the Vaseyi Chapter with the August Kehr Award. Because of John's exemplary service for many years it gives us great pleasure as a Society to honor him with the Distinguished Service Award."



▲ ASA President Aaron Cook presents the Distinguished Service Award to John Brown.

Or, consider joining for life, for the one-time payment of \$500 or five consecutive annual payments of \$100 each. Sorry, this is not available for organizations or overseas members.

Finally, write your check or money order in US dollars for the total amount, payable to the "Azalea Society of America." Mail it by December 31 along with a copy of this page to:

Dan Krabill, ASA Treasurer
6009 Copely Lane
McLean, VA 22101-2507

Alternatively, you may pay your dues with a credit card online through Paypal (<http://www.paypal.com>). Send your dues payment to: PayTheASA@aol.com. You can open a PayPal account in minutes (and if it asks, please mention PayTheASA@aol.com as the person who referred you). Then describe your changes, your membership type, and the number of years you are renewing for in the comments section.

If you know you are not going to renew, please let us know by letter or e-mail to dkrabill@gmail.com, so we will not have to mail you dues notices.

Society Seeking Applications for Editor

The Azalea Society of America is accepting applications for the position of Editor of *The Azalean*.

This is a part-time, paid position responsible for organizing and directing the process of publishing four quarterly issues of *The Azalean*, the horticultural journal of the Azalea Society of America, each calendar year.

Management and organization skills are necessary. The Editor must be familiar with desktop computer publishing and must have an interest in azaleas. The Editor should be

Membership Renewals Due

Dan Krabill, ASA Treasurer

It is almost time for most of us to renew our memberships in the Azalea Society of America. Your membership expiration year should appear on the top line of the address label for this issue of *The Azalean*. If the year 2011 appears on that line, your membership expires at the end of this year.

Please review the information on your address label and make any needed corrections. Also, if your telephone number or e-mail address has changed, please provide us with the correct information.

Then, circle an amount in the table below to show the number of years and the type of membership you would like. The table includes a \$1 discount for each year paid in advance, up to \$5 per year. Those years are paid in full, even if the dues are increased later. For example, to renew for four years as a Regular Member, circle \$94 in the table.

Years	Regular	Contributing	Supporting	Endowment
1	\$25	\$50	\$100	\$200
2	\$49	\$99	\$199	\$399
3	\$72	\$147	\$297	\$597
4	\$94	\$194	\$394	\$794
5	\$115	\$240	\$490	\$990
6	\$135	\$285	\$585	\$1185

proficient in spelling, grammar, and punctuation. He/she must have excellent interpersonal skills when soliciting articles and suggesting editorial revisions to authors, and be a disciplined and responsible self-starter who is also willing to recruit potential authors, and to write articles on occasion. Good working knowledge of horticultural terms, editorial experience and excellent skills with word processing, digital imaging software, and/or desktop publishing programs, and working knowledge of production and printing processes are desirable.

The Editor reports directly to the ASA Board of Directors and is an *ex officio* member of the board. The Editor participates in all board activities and is expected to attend all board meetings, including the annual convention and meeting of the Azalea Society of America.

For more information or to submit a resume, please e-mail ASA President John Migas at azaleajohn@yahoo.com.

Current Editor Pam Fitch announced her resignation from the position in September effective with the Winter 2011 issue. Fitch has served as Editor since the Fall of 2006.

"It has been a wonderful experience, and I have thoroughly enjoyed working with the ASA Board of Directors to produce a first-class journal," she said. "I will remain active with the Texas Chapter, and look forward to being a part of the planning committee for the 2015 ASA National Convention in Nacogdoches."

Recognizing Generous ASA Members

Dan Krabill, Treasurer

I would like to recognize and thank those individuals who have donated to the Azalea Society of America, by paying dues in excess of the \$25 per year standard amount or by making direct payments to the ASA. We have three categories for donations – Endowment (payment of \$200 or more per year), Sustaining (\$100 to \$199 per year), and Contributing (\$50 - \$99 per year). These donations provided more than 5 percent of our income in 2011 and are important in carrying out the work of the ASA.

Below is a list of members in these three categories for 2011.

Contributing Members 2011

Donations of \$50 to \$99

Airlie Gardens
Parker Andes
John Bartlett
Box Lee Azaleas
John and Carolyn Brown
Virginia and Samuel Burd
Janelle Corey
Scotty Cox
Maggie and Brent Fernald
William and Eleanor Gural
Harold E. Hall, Jr.
Jeanne M. Hammer

Bob and Martha Kelly
Richard and Nancy Lear
Magnolia Plantation
Larry Miller
Regina Mullen
W.T. Norris, Jr., M.D.
H.M. Perritt
The Polly Hill Arboretum
Cid and Liza Scallet
David and Carolyn Smith
Harry Smutzer
Nancy Snoberger
David Wertz
Lydia and G.W. Willis, M.D.

Sustaining Members 2011

Donations of \$100 to \$199

Louis J. Appell, Jr.
Stephen Ash
Nien-Chou Chen
Mary M. King
Kinney Nursery
Dan and Barbara Krabill
Mrs. Lawrence Nachman
Nan and John Papalia
Cecil and Gloria Settle
Barbara Stump
Roger A. Thompson

Endowment Members 2011

Donations of \$200 or more

Donald H. Voss

Call for Articles

The Azalean needs more good articles about azaleas, their care, and their use in the landscape. Ideas for topics include:

- Articles describing new public gardens or special azalea collections being created in your area.
- Descriptions and photographs of Society members' gardens.
- Current research on azaleas.
- Information about azalea festivals and sales.
- Historic garden restoration stories.
- Articles about noteworthy azalea hybrid groups or new species or cultivar introductions.

Articles should be submitted as Microsoft Word documents. Illustrations are highly encouraged and should be at least 4 x 6 inches at 300 dpi resolution. Submit materials to:

Pam Fitch, Editor
PO Box 632537
Nacogdoches, TX 75963
E-mail: theazalean@gmail.com.

Chapter News

Ben Morrison

Harold Belcher

Our Cutting Picnic was held at the home and garden of **Bill and Gabrielle Scott**. Attending the Cutting Picnic were: **Barbara Bullock, Grey Carter, Jim and Lois Duffy, Debra Hughes, Joe Miller, Carol Segree, and Harold Belcher**. **Carol and Dale Flowers** had another engagement and were unable to attend. Barbara was kind enough to play her guitar for us. **Jim and Lois Duffy, Gabrielle Scott and Carol Segree** brought plants to share with the members. The shared plants included an azalea, rhododendrons, iris, and blackberry lilies.

We had a great time, lots of good food and conversation. Gabrielle gave several garden tours for us. Due to the heat, we stayed inside. No business meeting was held. The picnic ran from 2 until 6:45 p.m. A good time was had by all! It's always fun when the members get together.

Louisiana

Regina P. Bracy

The Louisiana Chapter enjoyed good food and company at **Jim Campbell's** place on Sunday, May 15. Jim was the host for the annual crawfish boil, which include boiled crawfish and all the fixings (potato, corn, onions, garlic, and mushrooms). About 30 members enjoyed the warm weather and hospitality found at Jim's place. After the meal, members toured the grounds and greenhouses viewing interesting azaleas, camellias, and other plants.

Northern Virginia

Barry Sperling

The chapter was glad to turn out for a successful plant sale at the Green Spring Gardens on May 14. **Lee McElvain** was the coordinator while **Carolyn and Paul Beck** did a lot of the leg work getting plants from local hybridizers **Bob Stewart** and **Joe Klimavicz**, among other sources. Helping on the day of the sale were **Rick Bauer, Rod and Mary Hoioos, Dan Krabill, David and Patsy Meadows, Sharon Raden and Barry Sperling**.

The annual cutting exchange on July 10th was, as always, much more than an exchange as the **Meadows, Dan Krabill**, and others threw in many potted plants. The pot luck meal was, again, beyond that of many fancy restaurants and **Kay Jackson's** home on the Potomac shoreline, which we briefly took over, was beautiful as Osprey and Bald Eagles soared overhead.

After a great spring and summer we're looking forward to our annual plant sale in September.

Oconee

Jim Thornton

Charles Andrews, a long-time member of ARS and a new member of ASA, was the featured speaker at the chap-



▲ Jim Campbell giving a tour of his shade house during a Louisiana ASA chapter meeting.

▼ Louisiana chapter members enjoying a crawfish boil.



ter's Spring meeting. His presentation focused on the Breedlove azaleas. The Breedlove place was a 100-acre farmstead in Cherokee County. In the 1960s, Charlie's father purchased the farm and held it until his death in the 1970s. At his father's death, Charlie inherited the farm.

Charlie was enamored with the myriad native azaleas on the place, and between 1982 and 1997 he photographed many of the spectacular specimens. Before he sold the Breedlove place in 1998, Charlie transplanted about 120 of the plants to where they are now thriving at Wild Wood, his and Mardi's current home.

Texas

Pam Fitch, Secretary

The Texas chapter held its annual membership meeting in July at Stephen F. Austin State University in Nacogdoches. **Barbara Stump** presented a delightful slide show from the 2011 national convention that was held in Indiana. It was also reported that Barbara is currently authoring a book on

the use of azaleas in Nacogdoches. It was suggested that the chapter may want to purchase a number of the books to use as a promotional tool.

Several years ago Nacogdoches was certified as the ASA's first national Azalea City. It is now time to re-apply for certification. A committee is in the process of completing the re-certification paperwork to submit to ASA.

Interim Chapter President **Jeff Abt** announced that Nacogdoches will host the national ASA convention in 2015. **Bart Brechter** volunteered to host the Fall chapter meeting at Bayou Bend in Houston. He will present a program on the garden's azalea research project.

Vaseyi

Suzanne W. Medd, Secretary

In February, President **April Sanborn** led a discussion on "Azaleas, Their Care, Feeding, and Enjoyment." She noted that there are many ways to succeed and even more ways to fail. The discussion, however, centered on everyone's successes!

Charles Andrews of Atlanta was our March speaker. He was introduced to beautiful native azaleas many years ago by his first love, trout fishing, when he saw azaleas along the streams. Like many of us, he had a garden with a single peak spring bloom and not much flowering after that. Over the years, Charlie came to the realization that native azaleas along with companion plants could give the garden multiple peaks of interest.

So he posed a question to our members, "How can we have multiple peaks through the late spring and well into summer?" Charlie's presentation (so thorough and beautiful) showed us how he is tackling the problem!

We voted to fund \$250 for azalea brochures needed by the North Carolina Arboretum in Asheville. The brochure explains the Azalea Trail and shares the ASA and ARS We sites. This is a joint venture with the SE-ARS.

In April, there was a combined meeting of Southeastern Chapter-ARS and our Vaseyi Chapter. Our speaker was Alan Mizeras, a Senior Master Gardener, and a principal organizer of the Henderson County Native Plant Rescue Group in September 2005. All present received a copy of two books published in 2010 by the US Forest Service : *A Management Guide for Invasive Plants in Southern Forests* and *A Field Guide for the Identification of Invasive Plants in Southern Forests*. His top ten least desirable plants were all too familiar! He gave us some valuable tips to manage or get rid of them.

We are so proud of **Dick Bir**, a well known Vaseyi Chapter member, who has been named the 2011 recipient of the Liberty Hyde Bailey Award. This is the American Horticultural Society's most prestigious award, and one of the 12 Great American Gardeners Awards the AHS presents annually to individuals, organizations, and businesses that represent the best in American gardening. He is the North Carolina State University Extension Horticulture Specialist Emeritus in Mills River, North Carolina. A full article explaining the award criteria and Dick's impressive career appeared in the April 18th issue of the Hendersonville Times-News, on the Web at <http://www.blueridgenow.com/>

article/20110418/NEWS/110419822 or www.blueridgenow.com then search on "Richard E. Bir."

On April 6th Vaseyi members, **John Brown**, **Bob** and **Audrey Stelloh** joined others in the brush removal around the unique *R. calendulaceum* azaleas growing on Hooper Bald. Jim Brant (Mid-Atlantic Chapter of ARS) has spearheaded this project since 2007. Azalea Chapter-ARS of Atlanta helped on this project. **Tom Wright** and **George McLellan** plus 14 Sierra Club volunteers were there. Everyone was pleased so much was accomplished this year.

Bob and **Audrey Stelloh's** beautiful garden was open to Vaseyi members and friends on May 7th. Last year, Audrey met Bob on Hooper Bald. Now they are a married couple and Bob's beautiful wife, Audrey, is a Vaseyi member too!

Our tour to East Fork Nursery in Sevierville, Tennessee, was our May meeting. Vaseyi member **Vivian Abney** grows and sells plants there to excite most everyone. She is producing selected Henry Skinner native azaleas from tissue cultures in her lab! It was very impressive. Her choice spruce grafts, dwarf conifers, hardy camellias, hollies, crape myrtles, and native azaleas are very sought after. As always, Vivian had a large wagon full of special gift plants for us to take home to our gardens. Thanks, Vivian!

New Members

At Large

Bob Erdelan
6650 Matchette Rd
Lasalle, ON N9J 2J9
Canada

Dennis McKiernan
5987 Arrowhead Drive
Foresthill, CA 95631

Nancy Di Tomasso
Red Barn Farm Rhode Island
490 Exeter Road
North Kingstown, RI 02852

Lake Michigan

Joe and Barbara Reed
4790 S US 35
Logansport, IN 46947

Bob and Joan Davis
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Walton, IN 46994-9548

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Jack D Fowler
109 Wilderness Lane
Williamsburg, VA 23188

Teri Madden
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Manassas, VA 20110

Barbara & Roger Randall
5003 Sewells Pointe Way
Fredericksburg, VA 22407

Tri-State

Pat & Jeff Swan
520 Sandalwood Dr.
Evansville, IN 47715

Ron and Leah Fouts
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Terre Haute, IN 47803-9696

Vaseyi

Rhonda Benfield
2720 Fall Branch Rd
Mountain City, TN 37683

Mr. & Mrs. Kenneth E. Graham
24 Sunset Hill Drive
Branford, CT 06405-6416

2011 Evansville Convention Wrap Up— Azaleas and Other Interests Challenging Weather—Still a Great Convention

Carol Flowers—Washington, D.C.

We have taken airplanes to most ASA conventions we have attended, but this year we decided to drive to Indiana. By driving, we had the opportunity to visit family in Dayton, Ohio. As the time for the drive came closer we began to take some serious looks at the Evansville, Indiana, weather reports. The reports were not good. As late April closed in, we worried more and more about our two-day drive from Washington, D.C. to Evansville. The rain was not stopping, and Evansville was reporting record floods. Our drive began not knowing what challenges lay ahead.

Before the convention, Evansville was an area of the country neither of us had ever seen. I was looking forward to touring the gardens and places described by the article in *The Azalean*. As we got closer to Evansville, sights of flooded homes and farm lands led us to wonder what effect this damaging weather would have on the upcoming convention. Would nature be kind to our hosts from Hoosier country? Area roads were flooded and in some cases probably washing away. Would convention goers actually be able to see the planned area gardens and natural landscapes?

In retrospect, there was no need to worry. Our hosts were up to the challenges. They knew lots of alternate roads to use and nature cooperated. We didn't have much sunshine during the convention, but we didn't have torrential rains either. The garden tour write-ups lived up to expectations and the convention speakers provided lots of new information on azaleas and gardening ideas.

This article has not been an easy one to write. In trying to figure out what to say, I have made trips to the local Chinese carry out for lunch, the drug store for a morning paper, and the grocery store for ice cream. All of this was really done to try and figure out what to write about. The article written to describe the convention and entice all of you to come was well done. It accurately talked about planned convention events. I kept asking myself what new and different information I could provide. A day passed. I finally had some ideas for this article.

While on the tours, and after hearing the great speakers, I came up with lots of new ideas for my own D.C. gardens. As usual, I doubt that I will implement many of them. During every Azalea Society convention, I see great gardens, am introduced to new varieties of azaleas, and hear speakers talk about wonderful garden related topics. What added richness to the events of this convention were the interests of our Hoosier hosts other than those directly related to azaleas. Information about our hosts' other interests began when I looked to see what surprise goodies were in my convention



Photo Barbara Slump

▲ Sculpture at the Red Skelton Museum.

▼ Exbury deciduous azalea at Wits End Garden.



Photo Barbara Slump

packet. Foodstuff is always popular with me, so I was pleasantly surprised when I discovered a jar of what looked like homemade salsa. The cleverly designed label on the jar had a Web site address. I figured it described something about the jar's contents. In the rush of events, I forgot about the jar and didn't see it again until I returned home. Sightseeing tours, speeches, the plant sale; and Azalea Society board of directors' meetings quickly took center stage.

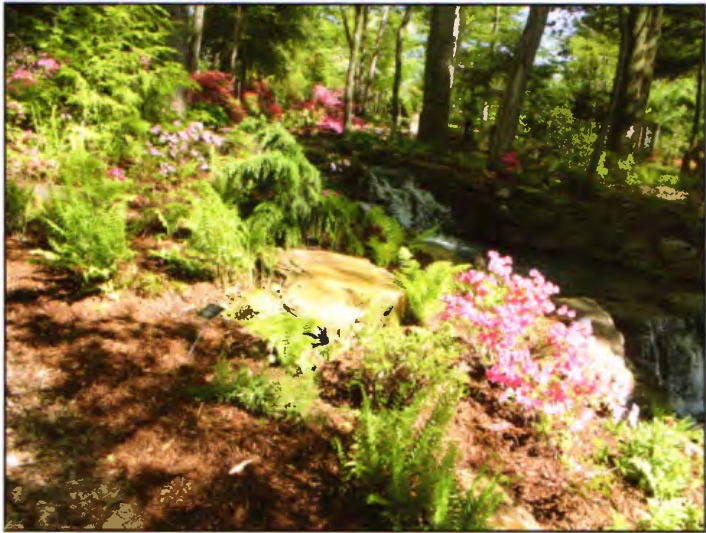


Photo Barbara Slump

▲ Hillside at Azalea Path Arboretum and Botanical Garden



Photo Barbara Slump

▲ Don Dillinger's Garden

Friday Garden Tours

Early Friday morning we boarded buses for the one hour trip to the neighboring town of Vincennes. Once arriving in the small city, local tour guides told us something about the town's history. Yes, Red Skelton grew up in this city. Taft, our country's 27th president, had also been a resident of this town. The town started as a fort around the time of the War of 1812 and over the years had been home to various Indian tribes, Canadians, French, British and eventually of course Americans.

We were lucky to have the opportunity to see the work of the area's well-known landscape designer Dallas Foster. He had helped the Emert family with the design and development of their garden "Wits End." Students from Vincennes University enjoy this garden when they study horticulture. I am sure much of what they learn has to do with the comprehensive collections of plants growing in this garden's series of six rooms. Of course, plants at "Wits End" include lots of azaleas.

The bus tour concluded with the 50 acres of azaleas and woodland plants found at the Azalea Path Arboretum and Botanical Garden. Wow, what a beautiful spot!

Saturday Garden Tours

Saturday tours concentrated on the local Evansville area. It started with Evansville's pride and joy, the Mesker Zoo's Botanic Gardens and the new Amazonian Exhibit. People from both the world of horticulture and the world of zoo animals worked to provide huge greenhouses with plants and animals found around South America's Amazon River.

With any visit to a zoo, the kid comes out in us. As parents and grandparents we now go back to zoos with children and grandchildren. We continue to be delighted by the new and fascinating animal creatures and plant varieties that exist. Amazon plants and animals were new to me. Hopefully for the sake of future generations we will learn to protect and nurture the flora and fauna found in this part of the world.

▼ Convention attendees entering Mesker Zoo



Photo Barbara Slump

We saw more Evansville city gardens, each with a different theme and different kinds of plants; each reflecting the interests of the owners. Lunch was a special event. Not many garden groups have members like **Debbie** and **John Bizal**. Besides azaleas, their interests include collecting and restoring old cars, World War II planes, and associated memorabilia. The barbeque lunch was great, but people like my husband weren't as interested in lunch. When the tour bus pulled up to the hangar, their eyes lit up. The opportunity to see and photograph these collections proved to be one of the highlights of the day. Who expected the opportunity to see restored World War II planes at a plant convention!

Because of the flooded roads I am not sure what Evansville city gardens I did or did not see. What I do remember enjoying were walks through beautiful housing areas. Thanks all of you who were willing to open up your gardens and show your private special places.

Convention Speakers

Thursday Night Speakers

Gene Bush, owner of Munchkin Nurseries, spoke about



▲ Howler Monkey Exhibit at Mesker Zoo

▼ Margie Jenkins admiring one of the Bizal's restored cars.



▲ Restored cars at Debbie and John Bizal's home.

▼ The Bizal's also restore vintage World War II aircraft.



the perennial shade and woodland plants he grows, collects and sells at his nursery. The tiny "munchkin" plants he displayed were not something you would find at Lowe's or Home Depot. I have little experience with wild woodland plants. My immediate thoughts were—what beautiful creations of nature. With a little bit of luck I will find the time and energy next year to plant a few of these "munchkin" treasures. I might even learn the names of some of them.

Tom Johnson was instrumental last year in helping to form our new ASA chapter in Charleston. In memory of the Rev. Drayton, who owned the historic rice plantation "Magnolia Plantation" during our nation's Civil War period and restored its gardens as a romantic style garden, the chapter was named the "Rev. John Drayton" chapter.

With much enthusiasm, Tom discussed his plans to use his knowledge of azaleas and camellias to find pre-1900 varieties so that Magnolia Plantation can be restored to the romantic style garden of its past. Tom's enthusiasm was catching. Holding meetings once a month, the new azalea chapter is off to a great start and is scheduled to host an ASA convention in the near future. If any of you ASA members

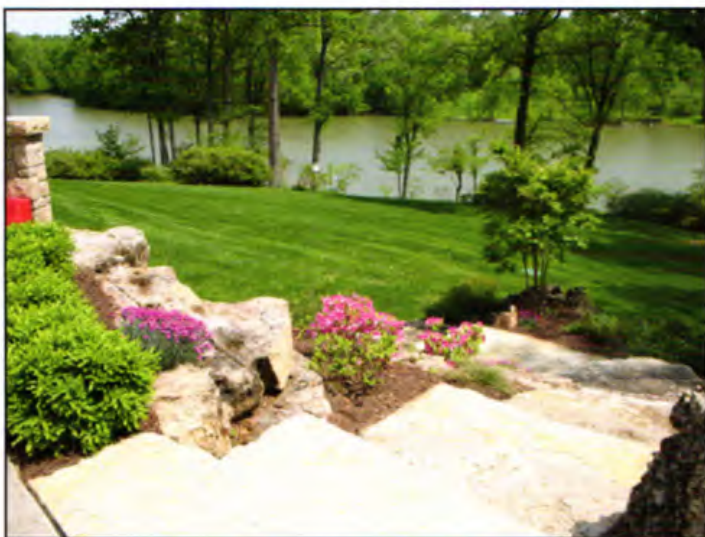
know the locations of the old camellias and azaleas please let Tom know.

Since I am by nature an early riser, listening to talks at night is generally difficult for me. Both Gene and Tom kept me interested and awake. Thanks for being willing to give these talks and for keeping them interesting.

Friday Night Speakers

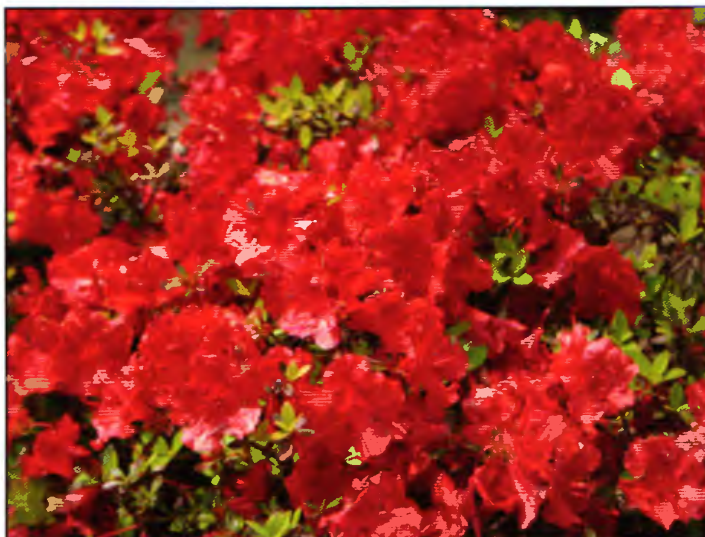
Our speakers, Jack Brown and Paul Bouseman, both provided talks the evening after our tour of the Vincennes area. Having lived in Evansville for a long time, Jack was able to tell us much about Evansville's past. He and Paul Bouseman had in common the fact that they both had worked on the Amazon exhibit at the Mesker Zoo.

A lot of study is going into the horticultural habitats that make up the homes of zoo animals. Study in this field allows zoo keepers to provide more comfortable animal habitats. In his talk about the zoo, Paul Bouseman provided us with a lot of information gained and put into practice to keep zoo animals healthier and happier. I even learned about a new plant-related field called zoo horticulture. Next time I am



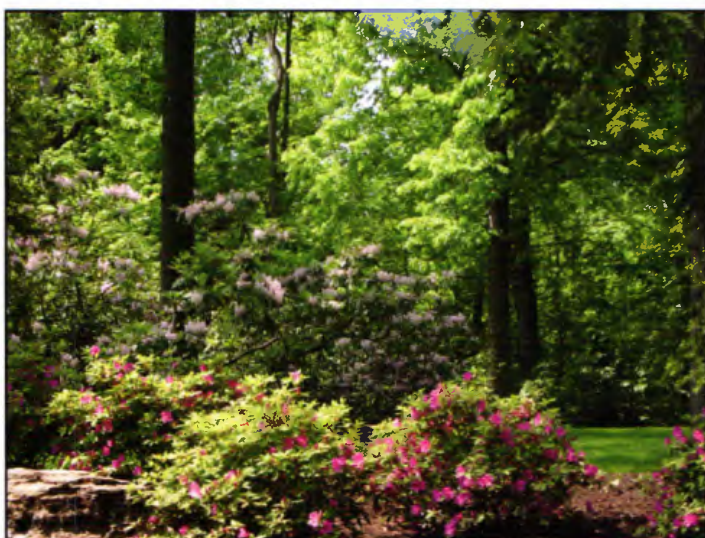
▲ Limestone steps at Fuquay garden.

▼ Fuquay garden.



▲ New planting of azaleas at Fuquay garden.

▼ Double pale pink azalea at Fred Sievers garden.



at the zoo in Washington, D.C., I will make more of a point of looking at the plants and trees grown there. Maybe they even have some azaleas I have never seen before.

Saturday Night Speakers

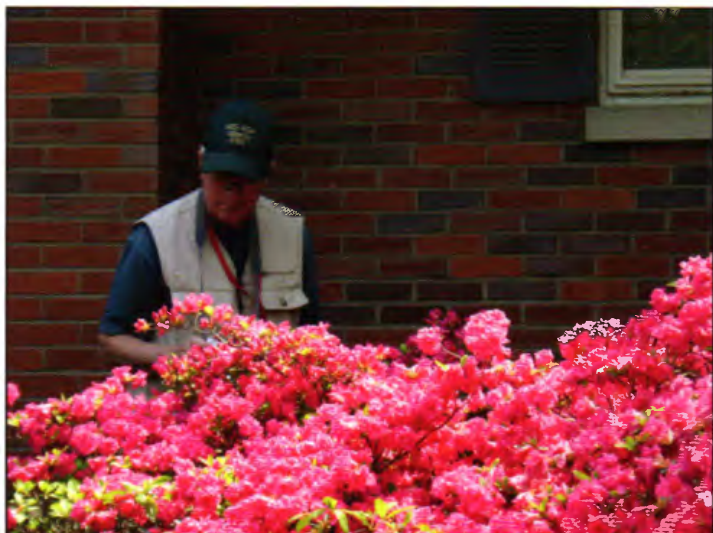
By the time the Saturday night banquet took place, we had been able to catch up with old friends and meet new friends. We had seen the varieties of azaleas that grow in the southern Indiana area and become familiar with many other types of plants. We were now aware of the fact that there are huge numbers of varieties of both Japanese maples and Hosta. We had been introduced to the wild flowers, ground covers, and unusual shrubs and trees which enrich the designs of our azalea gardens. We now knew more about azaleas and companion plants. Many of us were thinking about introducing these plants to our own gardens. Obviously whether or not these plants could be grown in our own gardens depended on the climate and soil conditions of our home towns. There was another problem with using plant: availability. Saturday night keynote speaker, Dr.

Andrew Whipple, addressed this issue.

Dr. Andrew Whipple became very aware of the problem of plant availability when he tried to find and grow exceptionally beautiful azaleas he had seen while attending the 2002 ASA/ARS convention in Atlanta, Georgia. Because of his biology background, he knew he had to learn the methodology related to tissue culture. During his keynote speech he shared techniques and methodology involved in plant propagation via tissue culture. It was these techniques he used to produce plants for the azalea garden at the Indiana University where he teaches.

I doubt that many of us who listened will actually practice this methodology. What we do know now is that this propagation method is being used more and more. Propagation via tissue culture will make rare plants more available. Our gardens will be all the more beautiful because of the many plants being grown using this method of plant propagation.

The annual meeting for society members was held after the banquet. Our newest chapter, The Rev. John Drayton



▲ Joe Coleman admiring the azaleas in Fred Siever's garden.

▼ Larry Miller's garden



▲ Larry Miller's garden

▼ Evansville Historic District



chapter, recently formed in Charleston, South Carolina, was recognized. It is a chapter that is already full of very active and enthusiastic Azalea Society members. We look forward to the annual convention they will be hosting in the not too distant future.

Summing Up the 2011 Convention

Sunday, my husband and I headed home. Once again we had met old friends and made new friends. We had learned more about the azalea and the plant world. Before the convention we had never thought much about Japanese maples and hosta plants. Now we knew there were hundreds of varieties of them. We learned that rare plants, including native azalea plants can be produced using tissue culture techniques. Because of our convention hosts, we knew more about the restoration of old cars and World War II airplanes – and after arriving home we again found that jar of homemade salsa.

On its label was a Web site: 2020clearview.com. I brought up the website and learned that one of our convention hosts

was not only an eye doctor and gardener but also the “Salsa King” of Vincennes, Indiana. Dr. Emert, if you ever want to give up being an eye doctor you can always get into food preparation. The Web site had lots of salsa recipes and is now bookmarked on my computer. Excess tomatoes and peppers from my home garden worked great in some of the recipes I tried. So now maybe I can be a salsa queen at the farmer’s market in downtown LaPlata, Maryland.

You never know what you might learn at Azalea Society conventions. What you do know is that you will always enjoy them and have a good time.

Before retiring, Carol Flowers managed a computer help desk for the U.S. Census Bureau. Her interest in azaleas came from her many childhood visits to the Planting Fields Arboretum in Oyster Bay, New York. She has been a member of the Azalea Society of America for more than 25 years.



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