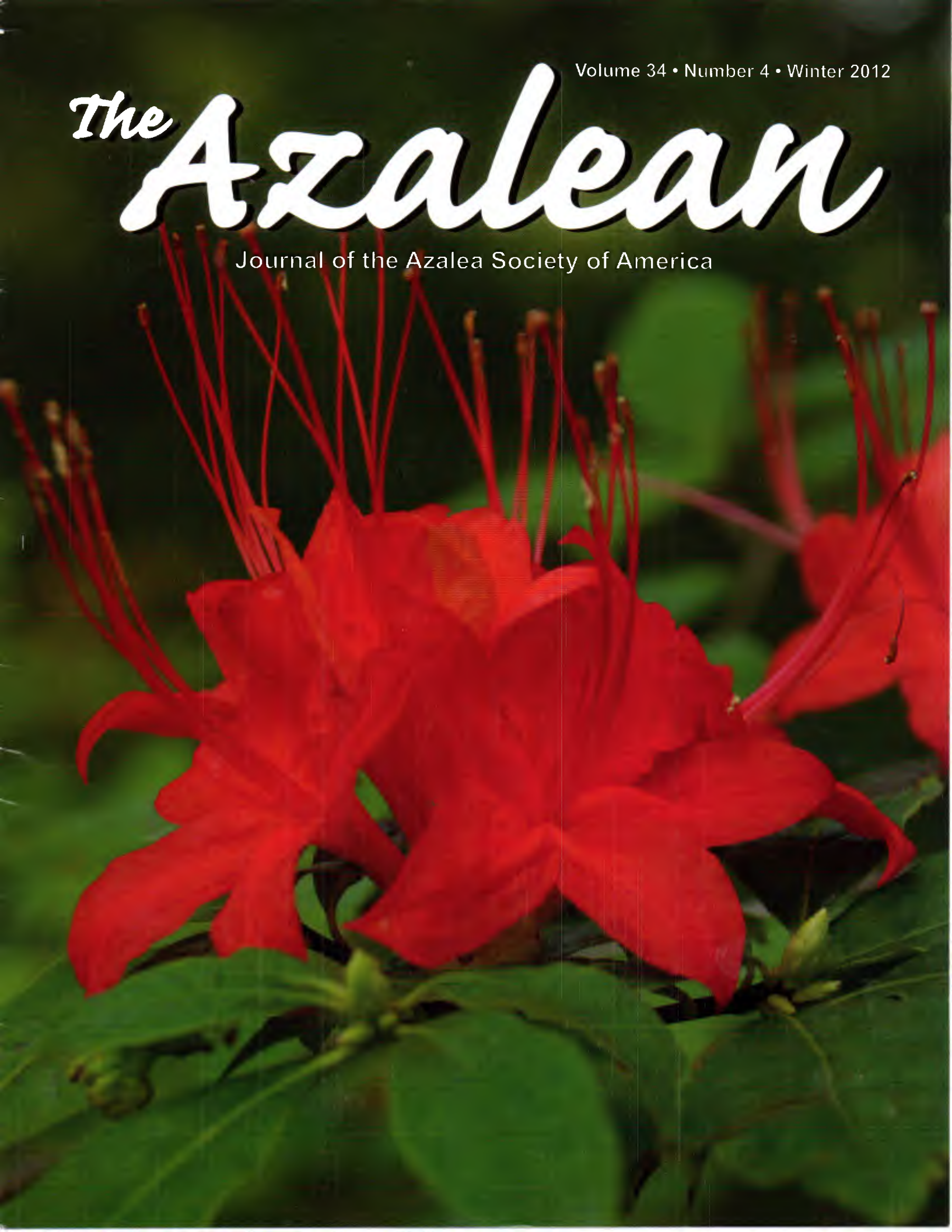


Volume 34 • Number 4 • Winter 2012

# *The Azalean*

Journal of the Azalea Society of America



# President's Letter

John Migas — Saugatuck, Michigan



Tomorrow will be the first day of March, and here in Michigan you would think that it is the middle of January. Just yesterday we woke up to a devastating snowfall that was not kind to the landscape. Many snapped limbs are now on the ground and shrubs laid over on their sides. This is not uncommon for us Midwesterners, especially along the shores of Lake Michigan. We still have another four to six weeks of unpleasant weather before spring arrives.

For myself, along with most other gardeners, spring can't arrive soon enough. The snow usually begins around Thanksgiving, but this winter our first measurable snowfall didn't arrive until mid-January. Since then we've had well over 70 inches of that white stuff.

Our average snowfall for a season is just around 75 inches, far from the 150-plus inches of snow that we had just two and three years ago. I know everyone is thinking about the snow cover on the plants. Just ask the East Coast victims about snow cover and what does Don Hyatt think about snow cover. In Michigan, we get it every year, year after year.

It won't be long before we all meet in Athens, Georgia. The Oconee chapter assures us of a great event. The plant sale is in the works with many varieties from local members. The conventions are a great time to meet up with friends and an opportunity to meet new ones.

I hope that all can attend and support the Oconee chapter. The next conventions are to be held in Charleston, South Carolina, for 2014 and Nacogdoches, Texas, for 2015.

Our upcoming BOD meeting will be a very interesting day of events. Many topics need to be discussed, and we as a board hope to get these issues resolved. I ask that all chapter presidents have a copy of their bylaws present for this meeting. We as a group are in need of volunteers, either on a chapter level or on the national level. There are some positions open and we need help from the membership. Also, our editors, Bonnie and Preston Cooley, are in need of articles. Please send them some articles for the Journal.

From what I have been told, spring has arrived for some. Barbara Stump reports redbud blooms along with some azaleas in Texas, Buddy Lee reports an early bloom of azaleas in Louisiana, and Georgia has some daffodils showing color. As I said earlier, here in Michigan we have nothing but snow to report.

For all the membership, I wish you a happy spring and hope to see you in Athens!

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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Opinions and views expressed in *The Azalean* are those of the contributors or editor, not necessarily those of the Society, and are presented to foster a wider appreciation and knowledge of azaleas. Advertisements are presented as a service to our readers and do not imply endorsement by the Azalea Society of America. Advertising and other contributions to *The Azalean* are used exclusively to help defray the costs of publishing *The Azalean*.

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photo: Patrick Thompson

## On the Cover

*Rhododendron prunifolium* Plum Leaf Azalea at Auburn University's Davis Arboretum. Please see the related story on page 62.

# Auburn University's Davis Arboretum

Accomplishing its mission through plant collections and collaboration

Patrick Thompson - Auburn, Alabama

Auburn University's Davis Arboretum is far more than a plant collection. It is an open air classroom, an ecologically rich green space, and a carefully catalogued living museum, among other things. The Arboretum's plant collections provide the setting and often the instrument to accomplish the garden's mission, which is to promote an understanding of and appreciation for the natural world, emphasizing plants and other associated organisms native to the Southeastern United States. The Arboretum has spent the last several years spreading its limbs beyond its physical borders. These metaphorical limbs are the efforts by Arboretum staff to connect with organizations that allow it to accomplish its mission more efficiently. Our most important collections have grown in many ways thanks to a variety of networks with which the Arboretum has become associated. The Southeast's diversity of native plant life offers a splendid palette to display in the garden, and the many people that have collaborated to bring those plants to the public are part of a growing asset for plant lovers everywhere.



photo: Patrick Thompson

▲ *Rhododendron* 'War Eagle' with post oak, *Quercus stellata*

We will take a closer look at three collections and the organizations that have helped them develop. The carnivorous plant collection elicits the most curiosity. It displays predatory plants previously unknown to some patrons, and includes some species on the brink of extinction. The next collection, the azaleas, are known far and wide as the royalty of the garden, but the woods around Auburn are home to their sovereign blooms from spring to fall. The final collection discussed here will be the oak collection. Although oaks often have a reputation for their size and the strength of their wood, several lesser known dwarf oaks now grow within our canopy of centurion oaks.

## Carnivorous Plants and the Alabama Plant Conservation Alliance

The most diminutive of the three core collections is by far the carnivorous plants. They are the smallest in stature, but also have the smallest existing wild populations, and especially *Sarracenia*, have very

limited available habitat in the wild. The pitcher plants of the genus *Sarracenia* are the tallest of the bunch; their leaves reaching waist high with fixed mouths the size of a baseball under ideal conditions. At the other end of the spectrum are the bladderworts. Our most prevalent species, *Utricularia subulata*, lives below the surface of our bog's wet soils preying on microorganisms, with stems emerging only for a few weeks in early spring when they lift delicate yellow flowers on hundreds of two inch stalks. These mostly aquatic plants have the world's fastest traps, able to snatch up zooplankton in a fraction of a second. Opposites within the collection again, bladderworts occur on six continents, while almost all species of *Sarracenia* are restricted to the Southeast's lower coastal plain. Unlike the other two groups we will discuss, this collection is not restricted to a single genus: the Southeastern U.S. is home to five genera of carnivorous plants. That is more than any other region of comparable size in the world! Many visitors are surprised to find out that even a single native plant has such amazing adaptation skills.





photo: Patrick Thompson

▲ Alabama Pitcher plant, *Sarracenia rubra* var. *alabamensis*



photo: Patrick Thompson

▲ Venus Fly Traps, *Dionaea muscipula*, in the Arboretum Bog

This opportunity to educate the public continues to result in an increased understanding and appreciation for these amazing plants. In south Alabama, several types of pitcher plants can be found but, as you move north, they become extremely rare. There are two types that occur. Both are federally listed as endangered. The Alabama pitcher plant, *Sarracenia rubra*, and the green pitcher plant, *Sarracenia oreophila*, are represented by a small and shrinking number of populations. It is through our affiliation with an alliance of plant conservationists that we have been able to display these plants and participate in the conservation of these species.

The Carnivorous Plant Collection has grown to become one of our core collections thanks to the Georgia Plant Conservation Alliance (GPCA). They invited staff from the Arboretum and faculty from Auburn University's (AU) Department of Biological Sciences to attend one of their meetings with the purpose of helping us initiate a similar group in Alabama. The Alliance brings together interested parties to network and update each other on projects. They make sure plant conservation efforts are not overlapping each other, and that no species are falling through the cracks into extinction. A meeting of the GPCA typically includes representatives from public gardens, universities, land trusts, state and federal agencies, and even growers,

native plant enthusiasts and other volunteers. It is a project-based model that allows for active conservation as well as a roundtable for discussion of plant conservation issues facing members of the group. Five years later, under that same model, the Alabama Plant Conservation Alliance (APCA) is active and growing in participants and conservation projects.

After meeting with GPCA, the Atlanta Botanical Gardens (ABG) asked the Arboretum to host some of the carnivorous plants that seemed to be spilling out of their greenhouses. The result is what may be the largest carnivorous plant exhibit at any school in the country. The exhibit showcases all the genera of Southeastern carnivores, and every species in the genus *Sarracenia*. They are displayed in different bog habitats among many associated grasses, shrubs, and wildflowers. These bug-eating plants naturally grow in bogs with low nutrient availability where their ability to catch an extra meal has given them an advantage over the other plants. These bogs have suffered greatly in the face of both habitat loss and habitat alteration. Some estimates state that carnivorous plants have lost 98% of their livable habitat due to human activity. The unique character and tenuous nature of the endangered Alabama pitcher plant made it a top candidate for the APCA's flagship project. It helped that the ABG, home to the world's largest carnivorous plant collection, had already

been conserving genetic material from the handful of existing populations. The APCA has successfully augmented a small population through a collaborative effort that involved The Nature Conservancy, Boy Scouts of America, Auburn University, and the ABG. The Arboretum has also been able to locate a group of plants that were rescued from a construction site and have been safeguarded on private property for more than 30 years. Seeds have been collected and are being grown at AU and ABG. The lessons of conservation and the fascination carnivorous plants instill have made them one of our most educational collections. The display might not even exist were it not for the connections we made through the Alabama Plant Conservation Alliance.

### Rhododendrons and the Azalea Society of America

In 2007, the Arboretum had about 50 established rhododendron plants from several native species. They were from mostly unknown sources, but still made up one of the largest groups of woody shrubs under the canopy of the Arboretum's impressive tree collection. The hollies and beautyberries were the only group that outnumbered them, and that was thanks to the relentless distribution efforts by the local birds. Then one day we had a visitor. He said he was Smitty and he wanted to give us azaleas. He offered us hundreds or thousands, whatever we could fit. With a staff of three struggling with existing maintenance and development, we were

▼ *R. cumberlandense* with blue-eyed grass, *Sisyrinchium angustifolium* 'Suwannee'



photo: Patrick Thompson

a little nervous about the proposition. We had already learned that our mature oak collection was made less valuable by the fact that there were no records related to the source of the trees, and had begun an effort to take that collection to the next level. The Arboretum is part of the College of Science and Mathematics at Auburn, and our roots are closer to botany than horticulture. The value of records comes into play when the collection needs to be available for research, or useful for conservation, both of which are important to our institution. We told Smitty we would accept native species with documented wild origin. He had been collecting seeds, growing, and hybridizing plants since the seventies, and had plants scattered through gardens near and far that he had shared with people. He began by bringing us several specimens of his favorite species, *R. alabamense*, the Alabama azalea. It was agreed that this species would be the flagship of the collection. It was also decided that there should be a defined goal for the collection. It was decided that the Arboretum would work with Smitty to acquire specimens of each species that occurs in the Southeast, any naturally occurring hybrids within the region and as diverse as possible a collection of Alabama azalea was to be made available for research and conservation work.

In order to display the variety of growth habits and flower forms seen in the species, and preserve the widest possible array of genetic material for the species, the collection will consist of one or more specimens of Alabama azalea from each county in which it occurs.

▼ *R. prunifolium* Plum Leaf Azalea



photo: Patrick Thompson



Smitty took to his mission like a duck to water. He called azalea enthusiasts, landowners, former students, and anyone else he could think of to get information about the location of these plants. Querying the state's herbarium records resulted in one of his most disheartening efforts. Many were roadside populations documented decades ago. As he went on a 500-mile roundtrip to visit donors in northeast Alabama, he stopped at 20 sites with historical occurrences. At 16 sites he found expanded roads, new housing, clear-cut timber land, and even plants that had recently fallen victim to herbicide. The urgency of the mission had become painfully apparent.

Smitty had spent decades trying to increase awareness of the dwindling populations of these amazing native plants. The technique he believed that could reach the widest audience was the development of improved varieties. The project he initiated spread to many local private gardens where the seedlings of his hybridizations were trialed. He was a charter member of the Chattahoochee Chapter of the America Rhododendron Society, which eventually folded due to lack of activity. In 2008, he attended the national convention of the Azalea Society of America (ASA). Excited about the potential to revitalize the sleeping Alabamense Chapter, he used his travels throughout the range of the chapter's namesake to drum up interest in restarting it. Conservation and research unfortunately are not enough to get the general public excited. That is where horticulture comes back into the picture,

▼ *R. austrinum* 'Millie Mac'

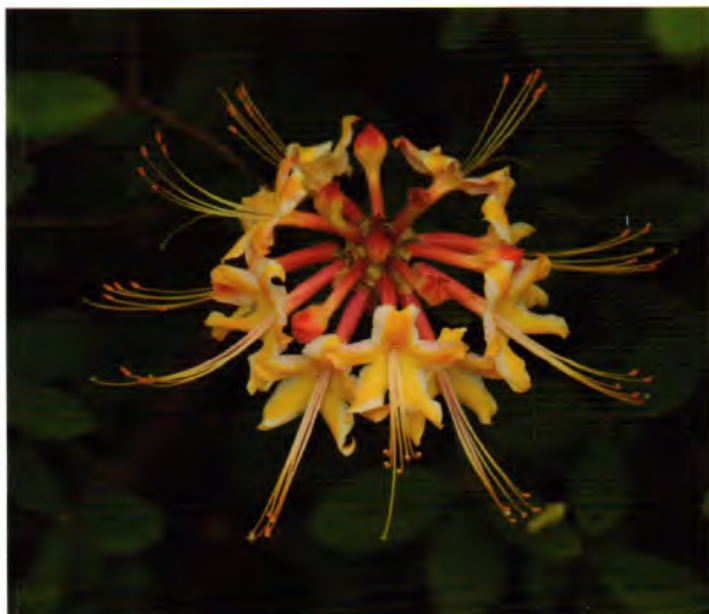


photo: Patrick Thompson

helping to inspire appreciation for the natural world. Fish genetics was a large part of Smitty's professional life, but in retirement he became an artist of azalea genetics. He hybridized hundreds of his favorite plants and made selections from the first and second generations. The third generations of selections are going to start flowering this year.

Unfortunately Smitty will never see them bloom. His health began failing not long after the national convention, which resulted in him working even harder towards his azalea goals. He passed away in the spring of 2011. All the Southeastern native species and most conceivable hybrids can be found now in the Arboretum. The first meeting of the new Alabamense Chapter occurred the following winter. The group continues the work that Smitty started, sending seeds and plants from wherever the Alabama azalea can be ethically collected. That same winter, four years after it began, his donation reached its crescendo. A network of networks came together to collect choice plants from Smitty's house. In a dense thicket of stems and buds, Arboretum staff and volunteers, Lee County Master Gardeners, and members of the ASA's Alabamense Chapter mapped 857 labeled azaleas and rhododendrons. From those, 350 choice specimens were dug and relocated to the Arboretum along with several hundred container plants.

The collected plants included Smitty's named hybrids and selections. Two had even been registered

▼ *Rhododendron* 'War Eagle'



photo: Patrick Thompson

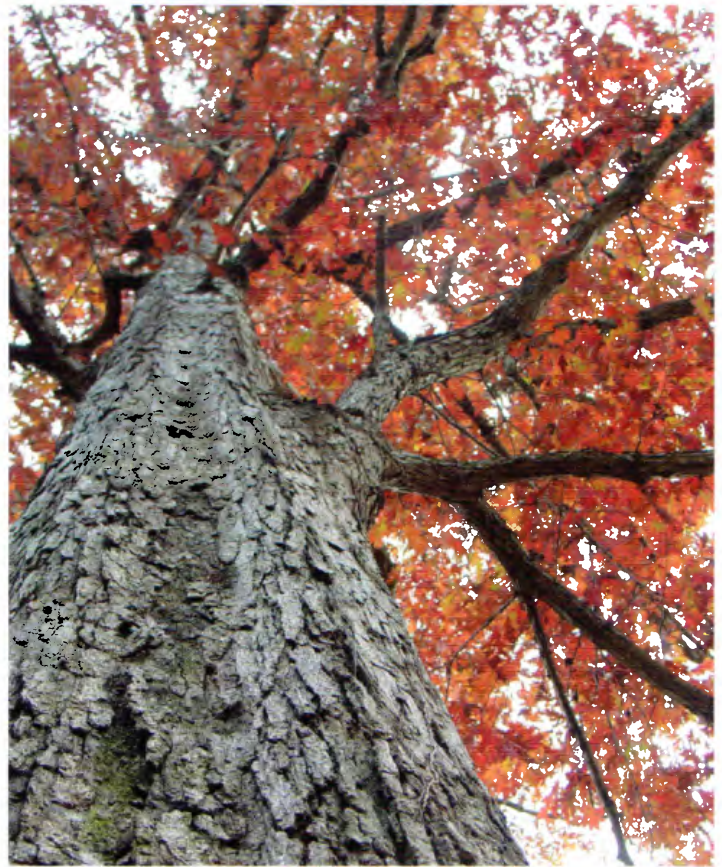


with the Royal Horticultural Society: ‘Patsy’s Pink’ (*R. colemanii* x ‘Gibraltar’) and ‘Corley’s Cardinal’ (*R. calendulaceum*). He had a vision for these plants. Smitty saw great future for the Arboretum, but knew it couldn’t reach its potential with its current funding. He hoped that his donation would be like an endowment for the garden. He believed the Auburn Azalea Series could earn royalties for the Arboretum while standing in landscapes everywhere as ambassadors for the wild azaleas, hopefully inspiring their conservation.

Smitty may have been surprised by how quickly the collection’s research value was realized. The ASA’s Azalea Research Foundation helped fund a project in collaboration with ARS’s Massachusetts Chapter that resulted in genetic testing on the ploidy levels of 60 individually accessioned plants from our azalea collection, and more testing is planned. This information will be stored in the Arboretum database, and will be an asset to future researchers interested in unraveling the mysteries of speciation in our native azaleas.

### ***Quercus* and the North American Plant Collections Consortium**

The most common experience for a student visiting the Arboretum is to be guided to a specimen by a teacher and learn the characteristics of the species for next week’s quiz and, hopefully, for future reference. Many classes teach plant identification labs in the Arboretum, and most of them will have oaks (members of the genus *Quercus*) in their curriculum. Some of the trees that students learn from grew for a hundred years before anyone considered they could be part of a teaching collection. Dr. Donald E. Davis recognized that, at some point, the scales of nature and development would tip to the point where it would be too inconvenient to go to the woods to learn the trees. Upon his suggestion, a hog farm on the Auburn University campus became an Arboretum. The site already had mature post, white, southern red, and water oaks. Mr. Bill Reynolds, the Arboretum’s first Land Manager, set about building the oak collection. Throughout the 1970’s oak species were brought in from around the state and grew well in the Arboretum. Soon there were more than 20 species in the collection. Then the Arboretum annexed the small cotton field next door in the 1980’s and a mesic forest was planted that included several more oak species, almost completing the Arboretum’s collection of mighty oaks native to Alabama.



▲ White oak, *Quercus alba*, showing fall color

▼ Post oak, *Quercus stellata*





For more than 20 years the oaks grew, and students learned about them. The archetypal specimens were the backbone of the garden's flagship collection. In 2005 the Association of the Public Gardens of America began a conservation project called the North American Plant Collections Consortium (NAPCC). The endeavor is a continent-wide approach to plant preservation that promotes high standards of plant collections management. The goal of the project was to establish which garden offered the best collection of a given genus for the purpose of conservation, research, and advocacy. When the program launched there was no representative for the genus of oaks, *Quercus*. The Arboretum contacted the program manager and learned that because of the wide range of habitat requirements, no one garden would be chosen, but that *Quercus* would be the first multi institutional collection for the NAPCC, and a southern garden would be a major asset for their effort.

At that time the Arboretum was a maintained collection of labeled trees in an undocumented forest of native plants being developed to be more appealing through more horticulturally informed installations. The NAPCC sent a mentor to evaluate our oak collection for consideration. The needs we had to meet to be a part of the program included accessioning the individual trees in the collection, writing a collection policy, developing a system to manage those records, recollecting species that did not contain specimens of documented origin, pressing and vouchering specimens for herbariums, and working to collect the Southeastern species not yet in our collection. We found that what we were missing were mostly dwarf oaks like the shrubby live oak, *Q. minima*, the stoloniferous runner oak, *Q. pumila*, and the myrtle oak, *Q. myrtifolia*, just to name a few. There is even a species endemic to central Alabama rock outcrops, *Q. boyntonii*, that was absent from the collection. It was no small task, but those species were collected, the requirements have been met, and now the AU Davis Arboretum enjoys full status in the NAPCC's Multi Institutional Quercus Collection.

So now the Arboretum sits on the main campus of a major university just down the street from two of the nation's most famously murdered oak trees at Toomer's Corner. If they do come down one day, there will be plenty of oaks around to console the Auburn family, and plenty in the Arboretum. The oak tree is often a source

of inspiration. Hopefully the oaks and other native plants we display will be able to also be a source of understanding. Each oak that remains standing can host hundreds of animal species and keep tons of carbon out of the atmosphere for hundreds of years. They preserve the soil, the water, and the air that we breathe. We aim to be sure they aren't taken for granted. The diversity represented by these three collections must not be underappreciated. Diversity is nature's way of backing up the ecological processes that allow this planet to sustain life. In a state with the highest extinction rate in the continental United States, it is clear that more understanding is imperative, and that is why we take our message of sustainability very seriously. For these reasons and more, we will continue to work with the people who love all the different plants that enrich our lives, and are pleased that the Azalea Society of America is now part of that network.

*Patrick Thompson is a naturalist employed at Auburn University's Davis Arboretum since 2001. He wears many hats including certified arborist, conservation horticulturalist, photographer, and stone mason. The conservation work has been accomplished through five years of efforts with the Alabama Plant Conservation Alliance. He is the current president of the Alabamense Chapter of the Azalea Society of America.*

## Call for Articles

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

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

Submit articles as Microsoft Word documents. Illustrations are highly encouraged and at least 4 x 6 inches at 300 dpi. Submit to: Preston and Bonnie Cooley, Editors, 6900 Skillman St., Unit 304C, Dallas, TX 75231,

E-mail: [theazalean@gmail.com](mailto:theazalean@gmail.com).

# Society News

## Nominating Committee Report

The Nominating Committee presents the following candidates for the 2013-15 ASA Board of Directors. Please vote using the official ballot found on the wrapper of this issue. Ballots must be received by April 1, 2013.

### Candidate for President

**J. Jackson** resides in Trade, TN. He has been a member of the Vaseyi Chapter of the ASA since 2001 and is also a member of the Southeastern Chapter of the ARS. J. has also been a merchant mariner for 36 years and still goes to sea as captain of a Post-Panamax container ship.

In 2006 he and his wife Lindy Johnson founded Appalachian Native Plants (ANP) as a non-profit educational native-plant nursery. ANP produces about 30,000 native azalea and rhododendron seedlings a year in an effort to preserve and promote this group of wonderful plants.

The decision to cultivate from seed was motivated by preservation. Many rhododendron species have become endangered from the practice of collecting wild plants. The Jacksons seek out specimens in the wild (and in collections) that have superior characteristics of growth, foliage and bloom, and propagate open-pollinated seeds from the plants.

The Jacksons believe one of the most enjoyable aspects of the process is exploring for and finding beautiful specimens "in bloom" or "in seed" in the wild. Digital photography is used to document the bloom and growth habit of the plants. GPS coordinates are used to map the plant location, which allows the plant to be easily relocated without having to mark or tag the specimen in any way.

### Candidate for Vice President

Born in Charlotte, NC, as one of four siblings, **Eve Harrison** later spent most of her childhood and adult life living in NC, WV, or VA. As a voice major she graduated from Queens University in Charlotte while raising three sons. Eve taught Orff-Schulwerk, a method of music education, for 20 years both in NC and VA. She currently lives with her husband, Bob, on five secluded acres 28 miles from Charlotte.

Eve's interests in gardening go back to her early 20s

when she would pass a house on her way home that was gardened "to the 9s." One day she pulled into the driveway and introduced herself to the occupant, Barbara Alexander, who has since been a life-time friend and mentor. Since that meeting she has gardened wherever she has lived and along with her husband is now in the process of creating a 3rd major garden in the last 15 years.

Eve is immediate past president of the Northern Virginia chapter of the ASA where she served for four years and is also currently a member of the American Camellia Society.

### Candidate for Treasurer

**Dan Krabill** has been a member of the ASA since 1987. He was Vice President of the Northern Virginia Chapter in 1997-98 and 2003-04, and President in 1999-2000 and 2005-06. He has served as ASA Treasurer since 2007.

He grows approximately 1,100 varieties of azaleas at his home in McLean, Virginia, including the great majority of the Glenn Dales. He has published an article "Photographing the Glenn Dale Azaleas" in *The Azalean*, and has distributed a CD consisting of digital photos of most of the Glenn Dale azaleas.

Dan is a mostly-retired management consultant to the banking industry. He has a Bachelor of Arts degree in mathematics from Miami University, and a Master of Business Administration degree from Harvard with a concentration in finance.

### Candidates for Director

**Barbara Stump** has been a member of the ASA since 1997 and is currently a director for the national ASA. She was also editor of *The Azalean* from 1997-2007. In 2007, Barbara co-chaired the 2007 national ASA convention in Nacogdoches, TX, and she and Texas Chapter member Caryl Hall are planning the 2015 convention, again in Nacogdoches.

Barbara has loved azaleas since she first saw them on family trips, but they really became a passion once she helped develop the eight-acre Ruby M. Mize Azalea Garden on the campus of Stephen F. Austin State University with her major professor Dr. David Creech. Friendships and plant-liaisons with ASA members have made this garden a wonderful collection of over 520



cultivars or species of azaleas, and have enabled SFA to trial many cutting-edge plants. The garden is the centerpiece of the annual Nacogdoches Azalea Trail, which attracts thousands to visit her adopted "home town" of Nacogdoches.

In 2007 she helped the Texas Chapter regroup, with Pam Fitch, Bart Brechter, and her late husband Mike, and is happy to encourage everyone to plant azaleas. She is working on an upcoming book called *Azaleas of Nacogdoches* that will record the giving nature of ASA members, the tenacity of early residents, and the colorful results in gardens today.

**Rocky Voci** has been an ASA member for 10 years, and served as Vice President of the Lake Michigan Chapter for seven years.

He holds a Master's Degree in Finance and Marketing and a Bachelor's Degree in Chemistry. He retired from Dow Corning Corporation after a 35-year career.

Voci is active in his community, serving as president and director of the 5000-member Canadian Lake Property Owners Corporation as well as president and secretary of Midland Michigan Morning Rotary Club. He is currently a member of the Big Rapids Michigan Rotary Club.

**Mike Sikes** is a graduate of the University of Georgia in the School of Horticulture. He has worked in the marketing and retail nursery business for over 30 years. He has served as President of the Georgia Green Industry Association, the Georgia Master Gardeners Association, and the Friends of the State Botanical Garden of Georgia. He is a Georgia Certified Plant Professional, member of the Oconee Chapter, and is presently co-chairman of the ASA 2013 convention. Mike is known for sharing his knowledge and love of gardening.

---

## Recognizing Generous ASA Members

Dan Krabill, Treasurer

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

Following is the list of members in these three categories through dues payments for the year 2012 or donations during 2012.

## Contributing Members 2012

### Contributions of \$50 to \$99

Airlie Gardens  
Parker Andes  
BoxLee Azaleas  
John & Carolyn Brown  
Ina Brundrett  
Buds & Blooms Nursery, Inc.  
Virginia & Samuel Burd  
Dr. Joe H. Coleman, Jr.  
Scotty Cox  
Suzi and Nelson Durant  
Marianne & Bruce Feller  
William & Eleanor Gural  
Harold and Caryl Hall  
Bob & Martha Kelly  
W. T. Norris, Jr, MD  
H. M. Fuzzy Perritt  
The Polly Hill Arboretum  
Billie Trump  
Maarten van der Giessen  
Mr. & Mrs. Art Vance

## Sustaining Members 2012

### Contributions of \$100 to \$199

Louis J. Appell, Jr  
Stephen Ash  
Nien-Chou Chen  
Jeanne M. Hammer  
Mary M. King  
Kinney Nursery  
Dan & Barbara Krabill  
Larry Miller  
Mrs. Lawrence Nachman  
Richard G. Odom  
Barbara Stump  
Benjamin D. Taylor  
Roger A. Thompson  
David Wertz

## Endowment Members 2012

### Contributions of \$200 or More

Patricia Elizabeth Cosby  
Magnolia Plantation & Gardens  
Donald H. Voss

## ASA Financial Position December 31, 2011

### INCOME STATEMENT

Year 2011

#### INCOME

Azalean Income	5,626.40
Dues Income	16,957.90
ARF Gifts	36,978.54
Gifts to ASA Fund	1,731.50
Interest Income	4,931.45
Seed Exchange	282.00
<b>Total Income</b>	<b><u>66,507.79</u></b>

#### EXPENSES

Azalean Expenses	17,634.92
Chapter Dues Expense	2,405.00
Dues Expense	434.12
Website Expense	292.31
ARF Grants	2,500.00
Bank Charges	59.82
Other Expenses	333.62
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b><u>23,659.79</u></b>

**Income - Expenses** 42,848.00

### BALANCE SHEET

December 31, 2011

#### ASSETS

Checking	1,969.13
Investments	143,211.37
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b><u>145,180.50</u></b>

#### LIABILITIES AND RESERVES

Operating Fund	17,536.50
General Endowment	67,338.58
Research Fund	60,305.42
<b>Total Liabilities and Reserves</b>	<b><u>145,180.50</u></b>

## ASA 2013 Convention Schedule

Athens, Georgia April 18 - 21

### Thursday, April 18

Registration Open	Noon-7 p.m.
ASA Board Meeting	2-4 p.m.
Dinner on your own	
Plant Sale	4-7 p.m.
Reception/Cash Bar	6-7 p.m.
Welcome/Speaker	7-9 p.m.

### Friday, April 19

Registration	7-8 a.m.
Complimentary Breakfast	
Tour Bus Departs	9 a.m.
Dooley/ Waters Gardens	
Georgia Botanical Gardens	
Lunch	
Karp/Morrison Garden	
Giberson Garden	
Return to Holiday Inn	4 p.m.
Dinner on your own	
Plant Sale	5-7 p.m.
Cash Bar	6-7 p.m.
Speakers	7-9 p.m.
Maarten van der Giessen	
Dennis Royal	
Jeff Beasley	

### Saturday, April 20

Complimentary Breakfast	
Tour Bus Departs	9 a.m.
Homeplace Gardens Nursery	
Lunch	
Transplant Nursery	
Founders Garden	
UGA Trial Gardens	
Return to Holiday Inn	
Plant Sale	5-7 p.m.
Reception/Cash Bar	6-7 p.m.
Banquet /Meeting	7-10 p.m.
Business Meeting, Awards	
Speaker: Dr Michael Dirr	

### Sunday, April 21

ASA Board meeting	8 a.m.
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# In Memory

## In Memory: Gilbert Canter Bowen, 1919 - 2012



It is with sadness that I report the passing of Gil Bowen. He was born in Washington, DC, on September 12, 1919. He attended the University of Maryland and graduated in 1942 with a Bachelor of Science degree in chemistry.

Gil had a very interesting career. His first job was with Celanese in

Cumberland, Maryland, where he did research and performed chemical analyses. After a year, he went to work for the George Washington University at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Indian Head, Maryland, where he participated in the development of rockets. After several months, he was transferred to the Allegany Ballistics Laboratory (ABL) in Cumberland, Maryland, where the emphasis was on rocket research. When World War II ended, he took a job as a chemist for General Aniline & Film Company (GAF), but he never reported. He was metaphorically hijacked by a Pentagon general and sent to Utah to work for the Chemical Corps at the Dugway Proving Grounds, about 85 miles southwest of Salt Lake City, where he worked on mortars and recoilless mortars. When the program began to phase out, he took a job at the famous Naval Ordnance Laboratory in nearby White Oak, Maryland, developing guided projectiles. His expertise in weapons development resulted in his management of eight to ten Navy laboratories. He oversaw more than 500 programs which entailed developing quick response solutions for the Korean War and the Vietnam War.

In 1948 on a blind date, he met Florence Ann Wright, a nursing student at the University of Maryland in Baltimore. They were married on June 16, 1951 at Old

Drawyers Church in Odessa, Delaware. On June 16, 2011, they celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary.

During the course of his career, Gil received two patents. The first, on September 5, 1961, was for a “high velocity, fin stabilized projectile, rifled barrel gun system.” The second was on August 4, 1964, for a “safe biological or chemical warfare projectile.” He assigned both patents to the United States of America.

After retiring in 1976, Gil returned to the University of Maryland and earned another Bachelor of Science degree—this time in psychology. Despite being the father of three, the grandfather of nine, and the great grandfather of three, Gil found time to work with troubled kids who needed help.

Both he and Flo Ann loved to entertain, to travel, and to work in their garden. Gil was interested in computers, stamps, coins, glass in general, and “glass chickens” in particular; and they had season tickets to University of Maryland athletics. But he was especially proud of his many azaleas. Located not far from Brookside Gardens, Gil went to great lengths to protect his garden from the deer which were a major regional problem. Gil and Flo Ann joined the Brookside Gardens chapter in 1985 and participated in all of the chapter activities. In addition to attending chapter meetings, Gil particularly enjoyed exhibiting his azaleas in the annual chapter flower show, and Flo Ann helped with the judging process.

In the prepared remarks for her father’s eulogy, Vicky described her father’s legacy as “a passionate love for life coated with a youthful energetic spirit.” Gil loved his family, his friends, and the pursuit of new experiences.

William C. Miller III  
Bethesda, Maryland

## In Memory: Eleanor (Jessamae Duttweiler) Stubbs, 1919-2012



It is with great sadness that I report the passing of Eleanor Stubbs. She was born in Menominee, Michigan, on July 26, 1919, the first of two daughters to the Rev. Herbert E. Duttweiler and Lydia Sperling Duttweiler. She grew up in southern Michigan where her father served churches in many different towns. She

attended Michigan State University, where she earned a B.S. degree in home economics in 1941. She met Art (Arthur Leisk Stubbs) at church camp, and they were married on March 19, 1943, in Marysville, Michigan. Art, her husband for 59 ½ years, preceded her in death in 2002.

During World War II they set up housekeeping in Green Bay, Wisconsin, where Art was an Ensign in the Coast Guard. After the war, they returned to Alpena, Michigan. In 1949, they moved to the Los Angeles area, where they started a family and Art worked for the U.S. Postal Service. From 1960 to 1969, Eleanor taught home economics and sponsored the Athenas Service Club at South High School in Torrance, California. In 1965, she earned a M.A. in home economics from Long Beach State College. The family then moved to Oregon where Eleanor became head of the Home Economics Department at Clackamas Community College, until she retired in 1981.

In 1976, they created Stubbs Shrubs, which specialized in growing evergreen azaleas in the Willamette area of West Linn. What started with a single, eight by ten greenhouse became a booming business with six huge greenhouses. Without the benefit of regular help, they annually propagated 60,000 cuttings of more than 500 varieties—always with an eye for the less well known ones, as evidenced by the informative catalog they produced. Ever the collector, Eleanor remarked, “Plant nuts like us have to have one of every kind.” They were “particularly interested in the low, compact, varieties—those which make the lovely hanging bas-

kets, the interesting container plants, and ones that give that splash of color in today’s smaller gardens.” While considering themselves a wholesale operation, they enjoyed the opportunity to meet people that retail sales made possible. They were particularly gratified that orders from Australia, Holland, England, Italy, and India were not uncommon.

They were both active volunteers at Crystal Springs Gardens, the site of many sponsored activities of the Portland Chapter of the ARS. Eleanor was a consultant on the *Sunset Western Garden Book* and *The Pacific Coast Rhododendron Story*, a member of the Oregon Association of Nurserymen, a past president of the Portland Chapter, ARS, and past president of the Northwest Chapter of the ASA.

Art and Eleanor liked to travel, making friends wherever they went. I first met Eleanor on one of her trips east, as a consequence of our both being officials in the ASA. We sat across the table from each other through many ASA Board meetings. I recall an occasion when Eleanor had been talked into giving a presentation and desperately needed slides. It turned out that I had a lot of slides that she needed, and I was very happy to be able to help her. While they liked to travel, they were also great hosts. Janet and I visited them on our way to the ASA meeting in Portland in 1987, and it was there that Eleanor introduced me to pineapple on pizza—a never to be repeated experience. In 1988, we saw Eleanor again when she came through Bethesda on her way to visit family in Florida. All too soon, however, the demands of old age made getting around more difficult and travel became out of the question. Over the last several years, our keeping in touch was reduced to the exchange of newsy Christmas cards. Despite the many challenges of getting older, she always remained very positive, and it was very obvious that a source of great comfort to Eleanor was that she had family near.

The following statement appeared in the memorial service program: “Eleanor accomplished much in her 93 years. Eleanor was a capable educator, active church volunteer, and a rock to her family.”—a terse but fitting epitaph.

William C. Miller III  
Bethesda, Maryland



## In Memory: Robert Wesley Hobbs, PhD. 1938 - 2013

*Editor's Note: Following is the official obituary from the funeral home in Owings, Maryland, and three remembrances from ASA members. Services for Bob were held January 16. Memorial donations in Bob's memory may be made to the Friendship United Methodist Church Music Program or the Church Building Fund, P.O. Box 72, Friendship, MD 20758.*



**R**obert "Bob" Wesley Hobbs, PhD, age 74, of North Beach, MD passed away peacefully January 11, 2013 at his residence. Bob was born January 28, 1938 in Chester, West Virginia, to Sara (Caughey) and Harry Spivey Hobbs. He was raised in Chester and graduated from Chester High School. He received a bachelor's

in physics at Case Institute of Technology in Cleveland, Ohio, in 1960, and then received his PhD in Astronomy at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, Michigan. He and his first wife Mary Ann McLaughlin came to the Washington, DC, area in 1964 in order to work at Naval Research Laboratory. He went on to work at NASA Goddard where he met Bee DeLung. Bob and Bee married at Friendship United Methodist Church on June 7, 1980. He then went on to the aerospace company CTA where he worked on many projects including the Hubble Space Telescope. He retired at age fifty-five in 1992.

Bob had a rich set of hobbies and interests. He was president of the Azalea Society of America from 1988 to 1990 and editor of *The Azalean* from 1988 to 1998. He loved keyboard instruments, including building a harpsichord in 1964 and reviving a wide range of other instruments from player pianos, a theater organ, several pianos, a clavichord, and a large church organ. He was a life member of the Organ Historical Society (since 1964) and member of the Theater Organ Society, Musical Box Society, and Carousel Society.

Bob was also deeply involved in his church and community. He was the organist at Friendship United Methodist Church from 1982 to 2009. He and his wife Bee also volunteered at SCAN food bank and continued to support local senior citizens after Interfaith Vol-

unteer Caregivers dissolved.

Bob is survived by his devoted wife Belinda L. "Bee" Hobbs of North Beach; a son James David Hobbs and wife Lisa of Washington, D.C.; a daughter Anne Marie Stallings and husband Joshua of Cheverly, MD. He is also survived by grandchildren Chloe Magnolia Hobbs and Astrid Lilac Hobbs, and Violet Sophia Stallings and Evan B. Stallings; Brother John David Hobbs and his wife Rose Marie, niece Dr. Nedda Hobbs all of Belmont, MA, and his sisters-in-law Laura DeLung, Eva Kenner and Sandra Kiernan.

### One of the Great Ones—Bob Stelloh

Over the years, the Azalea Society has been blessed with a large number of good leaders and workers, including a handful of great ones. Bob Hobbs was one of the great ones. Among his noteworthy accomplishments on behalf of the Azalea Society was being our national president for three years starting in 1988. As if that wasn't enough, Bob was editor of *The Azalean* from 1989 to 1998, along with his wife Belinda "Bee" Hobbs. He was also a significant member of the Historical Organ Society, he restored organs and similar musical instruments as a hobby, and he was the church organist for the Friendship Methodist Church in Friendship, Maryland, for 20 years.

Bob was brilliant and wise yet patient and humble, and he had the willingness and skills to both tackle the big picture and the attention to small details needed to solve problems. He also had an obvious love of others, which made him a really nice person to be around. Many years ago my late wife Denise and I were fortunate to have gone on a garden-visiting cruise to the Leeward Islands of the Caribbean with Bob and Bee and their friends and neighbors Sue and George Switzer, which let me learn about Bob in a social setting. It was a wonderful experience!

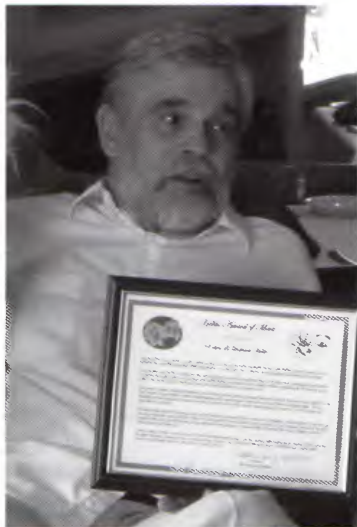
We owe the current look and feel of *The Azalean* to the Hobbs. When they took over in 1989, it had already evolved from a folded newsletter to a stapled 24-page black/white magazine with Dr. Charles Evans as editor. Typical of Bob's scientific background, his first editorial discussed the problems of obtaining articles, rising costs, and enhancing value to the readers in part by using color (which would of course increase costs). The Hobbs introduced a color cover in 1990 and inside color photos in 1991—and paid for it by taking over the typesetting and layout themselves rather than using the previously paid-for outside service.

Bob helped reduce the perpetual problem of not having enough articles for *The Azalean* by doing some of it himself—he attended and wrote the after-the-fact convention articles himself during the Hobb’s 10 years as editors. He frequently encouraged all of us to submit articles. I particularly remember a roundtable discussion he organized and led at our 1995 convention in Rockville, Maryland, on ways to improve the magazine and how to “inspire contributors to the journal.”

We all learn something from everyone we know and work with. If we are lucky, we have a few close associates as mentors to look up to and learn from. Thank you, Bob, for having been one of my mentors.

### Generosity Himself—Barbara Stump

I first met Bob Hobbs in the spring of 1999. After having been hired as the first paid editor of *The Azalean*, he and Bee had offered to help me learn the ropes. We agreed that I would help co-edit the first couple of issues of 2000 then take over with the summer issue. Not only did he and Bee offer to help me, but they also invited me to join them at their North Beach home in Maryland. My brother lived in Ellicott City at the time, so I was able to visit him and then drive down for my training. It turned out to be a very snowy weekend, and I nearly got snowed in at their home.



Bob and Bee were truly gracious in telling me all about their 10 years as co-editors of *The Azalean*. Now that shows how strong their relationship was. So many editors are critical types, as some of you know from experience. They showed me their file boxes of work, which was daunting. They described how Bob learned a layout program so he could save

the Society costs, and they described how they took the issues to the post office themselves, after printing and sticking the labels. Talk about dedication to the Society. He explained, patiently, why single quotes around azalea and rhododendron names belong inside terminal punctuation, in spite of my English-major training. I was amazed to see one of his pipe organs, as well. They showed me their azalea garden under its protective blanket of snow. All in all, it was an amazing in-

roduction to so much that makes the Society great and welcoming to new people.

As I helped them with the following two issues, they both were patient and consistent, always ready to help. When I took over the job, Bob remained on the editorial review board for years, continuing to give pertinent advice. As I saw him and Bee at various conventions, they continued to be helpful and interested in *The Azalean* and chimed in frequently about the need for more articles from the membership. It was fun, I’m sure, for him to be able to just enjoy the azaleas as plants and not just topics for articles. I did not know him as well as many of the rest of you, but I can join in your chorus of thanks for this intelligent, giving, soul.

### Remembering a Friend—Harold Belcher

I’ve known Bob since 1966 when he and Mary Ann moved next door to me. I knew that Bob was interested in music and pipe organs in particular. Bob wanted to build a structure in their backyard to house a large pipe organ. My parents gave Bob and Mary Ann a variance to allow them to build the structure and I helped Bob with some of the construction. I enjoyed working with him on the organ house in his backyard and helped move the large (two stories) pipe organ into the structure. It was a work of art and reminded me of the pipe organ in Captain Nemo’s submarine the Nautilus in *Twenty Thousand Leagues under the Sea*. When we were finished, I remember asking Bob if bats would fly out when he played. Bob replied with a smile, “I hope not but we’ll see.” I enjoyed hearing him play the organ in the evenings; however, I never saw any bats fly out when he played.

I knew that Bob was an astronomer. We talked about astronomy and about the comet Kohoutek, circa 1973, and space research. Kohoutek was billed as the “Comet of the Century” by the media but turned out to be a blip in the sky that was difficult to see. I remember talking to Bob about Kohoutek and he commented that sometimes things don’t turn out as we expect. Amen to that!

Bob worked at the Naval Research Laboratory (NRL) before moving on to the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, Goddard Space Flight Center in Greenbelt, Maryland. When I worked at NRL, after Bob had moved to Goddard, I discovered that we both had worked with some of the same scientists. That made for some interesting conversations and reminiscence.

I watched Bob’s and Mary Ann’s children, David and Ann Marie, grow up next door. They were the light of his life. I particularly enjoyed the “Easter Egg Hunt,”



a tradition that continues to this day with the children and grandchildren. I also enjoyed seeing some of Bob's and David's science projects, particularly the rockets. I used to do the same thing although on a much less sophisticated level.

Bob and Mary Ann separated and I only saw Bob a few times when he visited his children. Although I lost track of him for many years when he moved to North Beach, Maryland, I fondly remembered his friendship, humor and intellect while he was my neighbor. I was fortunate to be able to rekindle that friendship with Bob and meet his wife Belinda (Bee) Hobbs. Their friendship prompted me to join the Ben Morrison Chapter about a year or so prior to our 2004 Convention in Bowie, MD.

Pat and I often visited Bob and Bee at their home in North Beach, to enjoy their company and take cuttings of their azaleas. We took Bob and Bee to Glen Echo to see the historic Dentzel carousel and the Wurlitzer pipe organ, which is still there, from 1921 when it first opened in the twelve-sided building at Glen Echo Park. There are pictures of the Dentzel carousel and Wurlitzer 165 Band Organ at: <http://nationalcarousel.org/psp/GlenEcho/>. Bob, Bee, Pat and I all took several rides on the carousel that afternoon and were fortunate to be able to chat with the person responsible for its operation and the care of the Wurlitzer pipe organ. Bob enjoyed talking to the operator and discussing the intricacy of pipe organs. On one of our visits, we had lunch at the Irish Inn at Glen Echo. On another visit we had a picnic lunch and enjoyed Bee's excellent chocolate chip cookies. We enjoyed those trips, and their company, immensely.

When Bob asked me to step up as president of the chapter, I readily agreed on the condition that he would serve as my vice president. Over the four years that I served as president of our chapter, from July 2005 until July 2008, Bob was my vice president. Afterwards he provided valuable support by helping me secure speakers for our meetings, providing counsel and listening to my ideas. I couldn't have done what I did without his (and Bee's) help. His contacts within the Azalea Society of America and from his many years in the community provided invaluable assistance in obtaining speakers for our meetings.

The Ben Morrison Chapter presented Bob and Bee Hobbs with the Hobbs Award of Merit on June 11, 2012. The award was presented by Jim Duffy, the chapter president, at the Pirate's Cove Restaurant in Galesville, Maryland. Several members of the Ben Morrison Chapter were present. The Hobbs Award of Merit says

in part: "There being no better representation of the friendship, good humor, love for azaleas and enthusiastic support of its activities, the Ben Morrison Chapter, as an expression of its respect, admiration, and affection, hereby establish and confer upon Robert and Belinda Hobbs its first Hobbs Award of Merit." Bob provided his help and support for our Chapter for over 30 years since it was formed in 1980.

Over the past few years, Bob and Bee looked forward to and enjoyed visits by his children and grandchildren (Chloe and Astrid Hobbs and Violet and Evan Stallings) who continued to be a source of great joy and delight. Bob would always smile when talking about them. Pat and I consider ourselves very lucky to have known Bob Hobbs and to have shared in the friendship and fellowship of the Hobbs family.



The U.S. Post Office will not forward *The Azalean* nor deliver it to a bad mailing address. Please notify the Society of any errors or changes in your mailing address.

E-mail: [dnanney@cox.net](mailto:dnanney@cox.net)

mail address changes to:  
Leslie Nanney, ASA Secretary  
8646 Tuttle Road  
Springfield, VA 22152

# New Members

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## At Large

Renee Halsey  
402 Ridgeway Drive  
Norfolk, NE 68701

Keep Pike County Beautiful  
PO Box 2161  
McComb, MS 39649

Eric Oesterling  
110 Bliss Lane  
New Alexandria, PA 15670

Robinson W. Schilling, Jr.  
3402 Sasanqua Drive  
Augusta, GA 30909

Frank Q. Smith  
PO Box 4825  
23350 Meadow View Drive  
Dowling Park, FL 32064

## Alabamense

Mr. & Mrs. James L. Williams  
12323 Veterans Memorial Pkwy.  
LaFayette, AL 36862

## Lake Michigan

Barbara Kurtzhals  
793 Parkside  
Elmhurst, IL 60126

## Oconee

John Kohli  
896 Birch River Drive  
Dahlonega, GA 30533

## Northern Virginia

Ben Dukes  
4335 Heron Point  
Portsmouth, VA 23703

## Texas

Sandra Dugan  
628 Whittle Street  
Tyler, TX 75701

Bonnie Lyons  
4320 Raguett Street  
Nacogdoches, TX 75965

Craig W. Reiland  
420 Rose Park Drive  
Tyler, TX 75702

Charles and Anne Rhodus  
261 Saddle Creek Drive  
Tyler, TX 75703

## Vaseyi

John Barnes  
1110 Marshall Road  
Greenwood, SC 29646

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# Chapter News

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## Northern Virginia

*Barry Sperling - Corresponding Secretary*

It was great seeing the large turnout for the Holiday Social in December. Thank you to Barbara and Roger Randall for hosting the chapter in their beautiful home in Massaponax. There were a number of items of business that I would like to report:

Chapter Officers for 2013 – the following members were elected to fill the leadership positions for 2013:

President – Rick Bauer  
Vice President – Lars Larson  
Treasurer – Paul Beck  
Secretary – Susan Bauer

The meeting included a vote on several donations to be made on behalf of the chapter as well as discussion of the ASA Convention for 2016 in Norfolk. There is a possibility

of holding it in conjunction with the American Rhododendron Society, but there are some details that need to be determined before a final decision is reached. These details will be presented at the March meeting.

The meeting also covered the budget for 2013 and financial results for 2012, last year was very successful for us financially. Any member who wants information on our finances should contact Paul Beck at [pabeck@gmail.com](mailto:pabeck@gmail.com).

Our chapter has been working with the Norfolk Botanical Garden (NBG) to expand their collection of Glenn Dale azaleas. Our chapter was recognized by NBG in the November-February issue of *Bloom Magazine*. In July, I was able to take cuttings from NBG's Sandra McDonald azalea garden, accompanied by one of their horticulturists. We are propagating these cuttings in support of the Legacy Project.



## Texas

Barbara Stump, Chapter Member

Several members of the Texas Chapter met November 30, 2012, to join me in dedicating an eight-foot metal memorial bench in honor of my late husband and previous Texas Chapter president Michael M. Stump. When 12 members of the chapter and Mr. and Mrs. William C. Miller III donated memorial funds to the SFA Gardens' Ruby M. Mize Azalea Garden in Nacogdoches, Texas, we decided a memorial bench would be the most appropriate use of these gifts. This is especially appropriate, since way back in 1998 Mike had driven me to Amite, Louisiana, to meet Miss Margie Jenkins at her nursery and pick up the first 150 'Koromo-shikibu' azaleas that grace the eastern front of the garden today. The dedication day was glorious, full of fall colors from southern sugar maples and Japanese maples accented by sasanqua camellias.

In a separate donation, Caryl and Harold Hall, also Texas Chapter members, donated funds for another memorial bench in the newest of the SFA Gardens, the Gayla Mize Garden, which is located just east of the Ruby Mize Garden.



photo: Barbara Stump

▲ Chapter members Don Parsons, Jimmy Rodriguez, Cecil Settle (back row, left to right) with Peg Kern, Sherrie Randall, Margie Rodriguez, and Gloria Settle seated on bench in Bed 26 of the Ruby Mize Azalea Garden. Donors not pictured: Bobbie Bounds, Bitsey Hail, Bill and Janet Miller, Jo Ann Smith, Nancy Snoberger, Vickie Snyder, and Sue Whitfield.

## Alabamense

Pam Thompson - Corresponding Secretary

At the end of our first year as a revitalized chapter we can pat ourselves on the back. We have a growing membership, a bank account, and we had a full year of meetings all over the state. We are planning our first publication, an Alabamense Chapter specific insert for the

ASA brochure that we have been sharing every chance we get. Most recently that was on a trip to the Huntsville Botanical Gardens where we had a seed swap and learned about the many propagation techniques of Vernon Bush. We saw the staggering number of azaleas he has added to the HBG grounds and received the kind of hospitality you'd expect from a master azalea grower with room to work.

Let's keep the ball rolling in 2013 by renewing our memberships, and inviting friends, family, and fellow gardeners to join us as we share our love of azaleas. This spring we plan to visit azaleas in gardens and in the wild. Field trips currently being considered include Calloway Gardens, Mobile Botanical Gardens, and Cane Creek Preserve. We are also hoping to make a run for the Georgia border. If our friends in the Oconee Chapter aren't too busy with convention business, they might be able to help us catch *Rhododendron flammeum* or *R. calendulaceum* in bloom. Our spring meeting will be held at the Auburn University Davis Arboretum where we will raffle off native azaleas and a year-long membership to the Azalea Society of America, date TBA.

## Rev. John Drayton

Linda Wood - Corresponding Secretary

Our regular meeting was held on November 26 with 22 people in attendance.

Officers/Executive Board beginning Nov. 26, 2012

President – Tom Johnson  
Vice President – Miles Beach (program chairman)  
Treasurer – Maggie Fernald  
Secretary – Linda Wood

The group was welcomed by Tom Johnson, president. After an excellent meal provided by the membership of fried chicken and sides, Miles Beach discussed his visit to the Boconnoc Flower Show in England in early 2012. The show included azaleas, camellias, rhododendron, daffodils, etc. He noted a few differences in this show and those held in the states; the judging occurs in the evening prior to the show with only the judges present, multiple blue ribbons for each category, and the name of plant could be unknown and you could still win a blue ribbon!

The Christmas Party was held December 18, at Magnolia Plantation in the Carriage House. As in the past the party was a combined effort with the Camellia Society.

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“Classic Athens - National ASA Convention 2013,” Jim Thornton, 42.  
“Great Mullein,” William C. Miller III, 46.  
“Hybridizing Concerns: Color Inheritance, Polyploidy, and Sterility,” Don Hyatt, 4.  
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### Hybridizing

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“Some Thoughts on Breeding for Hardiness in Section Tsutsutsi Azaleas,” David Purdy, 11.  
“Thoughts on Azalea Hybridizing,” Don Hyatt, 24.

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# Kurume Azaleas - Personal Reflections

Joe H. Coleman - Lithonia, Georgia

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*Editor's Note: It has been suggested by several members that we should reprint articles from past issues of **The Azalean**. As we have room, we will reprint items from the archive. This piece originally appeared in the September, 1997 issue of **The Azalean**. Thank You to Audrey Stelloh for suggesting this article.*

In exploring the Kurume azaleas, I found that there is a wealth of scholarly information currently available, particularly in Fred Galle's *Azaleas*, in articles by John Creech in the *American Horticulturist* magazine and more recently, a fine article by William Miller in **The Azalean**. Rather than do an extensive history and geographical review, I prefer to accept the plants no matter how dubious their origins or how variable the spelling of their names. Many of these plants look quite similar; their minute differences may be appreciated by Japanese plantsmen, but they are lost on my less discerning eye. Even when I have three of the same plant, each with a different exotic name, I don't worry about the botanical details, I just enjoy their beauty! Where did my attraction to Kurumes come from? Spring in Atlanta means dogwoods blooming with masses of azaleas filling the landscape with color: white, pink, or two shades of red.

I grew up believing that to get a building permit for a red brick house, 'Hinodegiri' or 'Hino-crimson' had to be somewhere in the plans. It seemed to be mandatory to place against the house a veritable hedge of a hue purposely selected for contrast—and I'm not talking subtle here, I mean the loudest clash possible! Okay, it's only for a week once a year, and it could be worse—'Sherwood Red' could have been selected. In older, more established foundation plantings, after ten or 15 years, most Kurume hedges begin to take on a rather moth-eaten appearance. This occurs when plant substitutions are made as older plants succumb to soil compaction, poor drainage, drought, and physical damage. There is nothing like plugging in the wrong shade of azalea and discovering the mistake in the spring. The most astounding foundation hedge I have seen is one of 'Hino-crimson' alternating with 'Snow' against a red brick house. You lose all confidence in the concept of using white to separate clashing colors when you view this "candy cane" effect! In the Atlanta area, there are only four Kurumes: 'Coral Bells' (glowing pink), 'Snow' (white), 'Hino-crimson' (bluish red) and 'Hinodegiri' (scarlet). Imagine my surprise on going to Callaway Gardens, to find a Kurume bowl filled with multiple shades of color: pastels, borders, and subtle tones. Taking this palette of color into the landscape

can really expand any design. I think it's a major mistake to limit the colors to be used; the fact that Kurumes completely cover themselves with color is the reason for their use in the first place. A great mass planting of a single color is rather boring, and if the planting is of 'Snow', you had better cover it with a sheet for two weeks after peak bloom, if you don't want to go from an outstanding white blossom to several weeks of brown, spent blossoms that won't let go. I would prefer to mix a lot of colors and let them bloom and fade when they will. With more shades, you have less chance of having two shocking shades planted next to one another. Besides, who said you can't move them whenever and wherever you want!

One of the more attractive aspects of many Kurume azaleas is plant form. Although Kurumes are often purchased as dwarf plants, only the Beltsville Dwarfs remain truly small. Given time, many Kurumes can get quite rangy, growing to heights of eight to 12 feet. When you choose a place to plant them, consider the light conditions. In good sun, plants can remain quite compact, often with the branches arranged in tiers looking as if they have been sprayed with color. In these conditions, plants often look like natural bonsais [sic]. In deeper shade, plants tend to be looser, with fewer blossoms and an open plant habit. Since Kurumes adapt easily to pruning, the Japanese use them in formal gardens less for their flower color than for their shape when trimmed into small oval rock-like forms, much like green Mexican beach pebbles. This creates the symbolism of rock or boulders where none is available in the garden. Pruning also permits Kurumes to be used as trimmed hedges or as topiary shapes as accents in more formal gardens. If I had the room, I would simply plant them where they would have plenty of room to assume their natural form.

Of course, the most spectacular aspect of Kurumes is their flowers. These plants probably cover themselves with color better than almost any other azalea group. When they are in full bloom, it is almost impossible to see green foliage on many Kurumes. If you tried to cover a plant with spray paint, you couldn't do a better job! Although many have small size flowers, there is plenty of diversity, from the tiny flower form of 'Twilight' to

# From the Editors

the larger flower forms such as ‘Ho-oden’; from the split petal flowers of ‘Koromo-shikibu’ to the double and hose-in-hose flower forms. Their ability to flower from the cutting stage on gives Kurumes the advantage of giving a full display each spring.

Since we are looking at foliage 51 weeks of the year, we should also consider the appeal of various leaf forms. Foliage can range from the soft and fuzzy (sticky) leaf of ‘Koromo-shikibu’ to the small shiny ovate leaves (unfortunately most attractive to white fly) of ‘Coral Bells’. The vast majority fall somewhere between, with a moderate sized, glossy or flat leaf fully clothing the plant. It is this distinctive foliage that makes Kurumes so easy to shear when needed or to trim into formal shapes.

Kurumes offer us another bonus— ease of propagation. Because they are among the first to bloom, Kurumes get a head start on seasonal growth; this also makes good cutting wood available early in the propagation season. Usually rooting hormone is not necessary if the technique is sanitary and the cuttings are taken when the new growth material will snap cleanly. Hardening off the cuttings is easy, considering how early they can be taken. As long as they are protected from wide temperature swings, Kurumes will have no problem in development. Normal spraying will discourage insect pests, lace bug in sunny areas being the primary problem. The only real threat to their survival is having the bark split during the coldest temperatures. Like other azaleas, there are a few such as ‘Ward’s Ruby’ or ‘Ruby Glow’ that seem to be more tender than others. Just take a few extra cuttings to protect yourself!

In summary, Kurumes are our “Harbingers of Spring.” They provide among azaleas our first big show of color, often making it difficult for us to appreciate later blooming azaleas. Indeed, in Atlanta most people consider azaleas finished when the Kurumes fade, forgetting that there are six more weeks to enjoy the Glenn Dales, Linwoods, Back Acres, Robin Hills, Satsukis, etc. Kurumes are only the beginning, but what a way to start!

*Dr. Joe Coleman is by profession a dentist, in practice for twenty-seven years in the Stone Mountain area. By passion, he is an azalea collector (for the past twenty years) as well as a member of the Azalea Society of America almost since its inception.*

A full year has passed since we took over the editorship of *The Azalean*. We have learned so much about the ASA, our fellow members, and how important this publication is to so many people.

When we first stepped into this position, *The Azalean* was a full issue behind schedule. Many challenges stood in the path of getting production back on time, some professional and some personal. We appreciate your patience and support as these obstacles have been met and overcome.

We are happy to announce that the Spring issue will be only a month off schedule and the Summer issue will be published on time. Many thanks go to the ASA officers, our editorial board, and our printer, Complete Printing, for helping to achieve this goal.

We strongly believe that *The Azalean* is a “for the members, by the members” journal. As such, we rely heavily on what you, the readers, submit. One of our biggest challenges has been obtaining articles and up-to-date society news for publication.

Looking back through past *Azaleans*, there are as many articles about local gardens and devoted gardeners as there were about advanced subjects such as hybridization. Chances are, if you would like to read about a certain azalea related topic, others would, too!

Email your articles and photographs to [theazalean@gmail.com](mailto:theazalean@gmail.com) or mail them to *The Azalean*, 6900 Skillman Street #304, Dallas, TX 75231 by the appropriate deadline.

<i>The Azalean</i> Publication Schedule		
ISSUE	DEADLINE	PUBLISHED
Summer 2013	May 1, 2013	June 2013
Fall 2013	Aug. 1, 2013	Sept. 2013
Winter 2013	Nov. 1, 2013	Dec. 2013
Spring 2014	Feb. 1, 2014	Mar. 2014



# Azalea Companions

Gene Bush - Depauw, Indiana

Interested in azaleas from my early days as a gardener, collecting did not begin in earnest until about seven or eight years ago. The fervor was awakened by two events that began about the same time. I happened upon a breeder and collector of native azaleas who wanted to trade starts from her gardens for plants from my nursery. Each November it was as though Christmas had arrived early. A big box would arrive and I would cut strings and tape and pull out paper, to find surprises she just knew I needed. The starts were potted up, held over in the greenhouse for the first year, then found a home in my gardens. She also introduced me to the book *American Azaleas* by L.C. Towe. In three or four years my collection jumped from three to fifty-one. And, I am still looking for more room on my hillside as I become aware of that next “gottahave.”

Then followed the secondary satisfaction of what came after my azalea purchase or trade. Once transplanted there was all that space in front of, between and behind those blooming shrubs that cried out “fill me.” Being the rescuer that I am, I jumped right in there to fill those voids. Remember those movies where couples always smoked a cigarette afterwards? Yeah. Satisfaction somewhat like that.

When working with transplanting and creating new spaces in my gardens I tend to work in vignettes that tie into existing ones. I am more interested in sequen-



photo: Gene Bush

▲ *Iris cristata*

tial bloom somewhat resembling what you would find walking through a “wild garden” than having everything pop at the same time. I do know that I want plants flowering before, during, and after my azalea blooms.

## Groundcovers - deciduous

When using groundcovers I usually plan on more than one level for the show. A drift will typically be broken by plants coming up through the ground hugger. That way there is a show going on over a longer period of time, the drift does not become boring when not in bloom, and you can purchase twice the number of plants for a single space.

The list of perennials I could mention is almost endless. I will narrow my selection to three favorites in my gardens. *Phlox stolonifera*, or creeping woodland *phlox*, is high on my list for its adaptability and maintenance free performance. It grows as a two-inch mat of deep green that rambles and crisscrosses creating a drift of ground-hugging foliage. In May and June blooms are on stems about eight inches above the leaves. All those I have grown are heavy bloomers. Look for ‘Blue Ridge’, ‘Bruce’s White’, ‘Home Fires’ in pink, and ‘Sherwood Purple’.

*Primula kisoana* wanders between larger perennials and my azaleas in extensive drifts. Easy to grow,

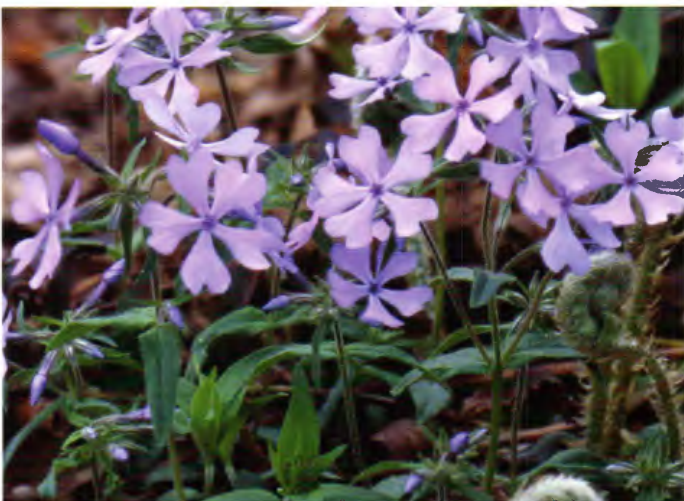


photo: Gene Bush

▲ *Phlox divaricata* and ferns





photo: Gene Bush

▲ *Delphinium exaltatum*

just give it the loose mulch you use at the base of the azaleas for it to scramble about. Foliage and stems are fleshy and covered with hairs. The one leaf to a stem in pink reminds me of an African violet my mother grew in a window. Blooms are deep rose-pink, topping off the plant at six inches. It is perfectly hardy, very showy and as exotic as plants come.

*Iris cristata* has been a favorite in my garden from the beginning and it grows in several locations. It must be a favorite of lots of others for there are many named cultivars. My favorites are the species, and 'Powder Blue Giant' along with 'Tennessee White'. Roots scamper across the top of the soil, rooting at nodules as they cross and re-cross. Blade-shaped foliage is only eight inches or so with crested blooms just above the green swords.

#### Ground covers - evergreen

*Gaultheria procumbens* is the perfect groundcover. It is a native plant which loves the pH of the soil and mulch used for azaleas. Only six inches tall, it creeps about on woody stems of red and brown with highly polished leathery leaves. Urn-shaped blooms of white become scarlet-red berries in fall and winter. Also, you can chew the leaves and berries as *Gaultheria* is the source of wintergreen.

*Pachysandra procumbens*, or Allegheny spurge, is a native plant that should be used more often, but gets

crowded out by the Japanese species *P. terminalis*. Once established, our native takes care of itself without becoming a wandering nuisance. Large leaves are felt-green, highly mottled and veined. Flowers resemble sea foam rising from last year's leaves in frothy shell-pink with white and tan. It blooms in my garden the first part of March, or last of February during warm late winters.

*Tiarella cordifolia*, also known as foamflower, has several named cultivars of interest. All are good ground covers with attractive foliage that changes color as seasons come and go. Lots of black, rust reds, and purple-blacks along and between veins, sometimes in patterns. Star-shaped flowers are held in frothy sprays well above the leaves. My favorites are 'Running Tapestry' and the newer 'Happy Trails' and 'Appalachian Trail'. Bloom is in May with azalea flowers.

#### Feature perennials:

*Actaea / cimicifuga* I enjoy for they are all late bloomers and make statements in size for the rest of the garden season. There are many species to use, both native and non-native, as well as many named cultivars. Most notable among named cultivars are those with "black" foliage. They emerge in April and steadily grow into large mounds of cut foliage. From June thru September, depending upon species, they carry tall spires of white "candles." They definitely make a statement in between two or three azaleas as they go into fall foliage colors. My favorites are 'Black Negligee', 'Chocoholic' for fancy foliage, and *rubifolia*, Kearney's bugbane, for species.



photo: Gene Bush

▲ Frost on *Gaultheria procumbens*



*Delphinium exaltatum* is the perennial that keeps on giving, and just happens to be a native plant. Nice typical *delphinium* foliage is on stout stems that do not need staking. At the top will be spires of lavender-blue flowers in abundance. First flush is in mid-to-late June and, if kept deadheaded, it will still be in bloom come first of December. Since it is native from Canada to Georgia, you can count on it being very adaptable in gardens.

*Helleborus* species and hybrids are a must for the late winter and very early spring garden. You can have blooms from December through April or May dependent upon weather and selection. Foliage is of evergreen, saw-toothed polished leather. There are blooms of white, red, black, blue, and yellow, with and without contrasting color spots. There are single and double flowers and picotees in pointed and rounded petals. I cannot image my garden without *hellebores* in bloom during our periods of gloomy overcast monochrome skies in winter.

### Bulbs & Tubers:

Hardy *cyclamen* is not seen much here in the mid-west and I cannot understand why. There are at least 3 species and many named cultivars that perform in my gardens. Shooting star-shaped blooms are one to a stem, usually in some shade of pink or white. With age individual tubers can have 50 to 100 blooms. Foliage stays close to the mulch at only 4 to 6 inches. Ivy-shaped leaves are deep green and often splashed with silver or pewter. Some can have leaves of all silver, others leaves of silver with a deep green “Christmas tree” shape in the center. Transplant in drifts as they are small. Look for *Cyclamen coum*, *C. hederifolium*, and *C. purpurascens* if you can locate them.

*Galanthus*, or snowdrops, flowers are often encased in ice as they bloom end of February and into the first of March. There are many species and named cultivars, but unless a connoisseur of *Galanthus*, go for obvious show. They are small tubers with daffodil-like foliage that have hanging flowers of snow white held at the end of a stem just above the leaves. They are clumpers that quickly build up in show. All traces of the plants will be gone by June. They are an absolute must with hellebore blooms before azaleas awaken.



photo: Gene Bush

▲ *Cyclamen* hedge with *Corydalis*

*Corydalis solida* is a tiny tuber that blooms in very late winter and early spring, then quickly disappears for the rest of the year. It is a favorite of mine for the tiny fern-like foliage of deep green in mounded outlines. Topping off the tightly packed leaves are spurred flowers in lavender-purple for the species, pink or red for cultivars ‘Beth Evans’ and ‘George Baker’. They will make offsets as they age and will gently sow seed that may, or may not, come true to parent. They are very easy to grow, dependable year after year and a good show until the azaleas awaken.

Do come visit and walk the gardens here at Munchkin Place. We can then talk more plants at greater length.

Gene Bush owns Munchkin Nursery & Gardens, LLC. and was a speaker at the annual 2011 convention in Evansville. His talk there covered azalea companions in greater depth. He is a nationally known speaker, gardener writer, photographer and gardener. Read more at his monthly newsletter *Garden Clippings*, and a weekly blog, *Shade Solutions*. His website is [www.munchkinnursery.com](http://www.munchkinnursery.com).

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