

Volume 36 · Number 4 · Winter 2014-15

# *The Azalean*

Journal of the Azalea Society of America



# President's Letter

J Jackson — Trade, Tennessee



Dear Azalea Friends,

The dormancy of winter is passing quickly here in the Blue Ridge of northeast Tennessee. Our weather was “mild” until February brought in more traditional cold, snowy weather. Because it is too cold to do much work outside, it is a good time to concentrate on ASA business.



I want to thank everyone who submitted agenda items for the upcoming board meeting. There has been much communication about *The Azalean* and The Azalea Society website. These two functions of the ASA are extremely important, and they provide a great deal of our value of membership.

Two new committees have been formed. *The Azalean* Support Committee will assist in the production of *The Azalean*. The Website Committee's duty is to restructure and improve the Azalea Society website. The content and publication of *The Azalean* and the structure and content of our website are high priority business points that are being addressed by the Board of Directors.

The members of the Website Committee are **Dave Banks** (committee chair), **Rick Bauer**, **Paul Beck** and **Chris Wetmore**. Their mission is to update the site and plan for the future. Keeping the website modern, user-friendly, and informative is very important.

*The Azalean* Support Group consists of **Barbara Stump** (committee chair), **Rick Bauer** and **John Migas**. This committee is tasked with supporting and assisting the editors in gathering content, as well as publication scheduling and future planning. The importance of *The Azalean* to the Azalea Society should not be underestimated.

The journal content must be supported by the chapters. I enjoy reading chapter news and learning about how our members are getting together and sharing their time. Also, the need for new articles is ongoing, so let the editors hear from you (theazalean@gmail.com).

I am very optimistic about these changes in approach to the production of the journal and the appearance and functioning of the website. The process of updating the website, better planning, and support of *The Azalean* are important to the society and will have long-lasting benefits.

Best Regards,

*J Jackson*

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 and knowledge about azaleas which are in the subgenera *Tsutsusi* and *Pentanthera* of the genus *Rhododendron* in the Heath family (*Ericaceae*).

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**Central Carolinas**  
(chartered October 2013)  
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*The Azalean* (ISSN-1085-5343) is published quarterly (spring, summer, fall, and winter) by the Azalea Society of America, Inc., Leslie Nanney, Secretary, 8646 Tuttle Road, Springfield, VA 22152.

Additional copies of the current and back issues can be obtained from Azalean Back Issues, 115 Hunters Lane, Yorktown, VA 23692. Please include \$1 per copy ordered, plus \$1 per order. Orders from outside the U.S., Canada, and Mexico are \$2 per copy ordered plus \$2 per order.

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 of and knowledge about 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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Printed By: **The Georgian Press**  
Athens, Georgia



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'Molten Lava' is one of the many native azaleas of the Western North Carolina and Eastern Tennessee mountains. See *Carolyn F. Beck's* article on page 76.



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# Mountains of Native Azaleas

A Trip through Western North Carolina and Eastern Tennessee

Carolyn F. Beck, Oak Hill, VA

Wow! What a spectacular journey! June of 2014 was the first time Paul and I experienced the annual trek through the mountains of Tennessee and North Carolina, enjoying the pleasures of seeing deciduous azaleas blooming in their native habitat. **Don Hyatt**, **George McLellan**, and **Karel Bernady**, veteran guides, who have been making these pilgrimages for decades, led us through our travels.

## Day 1

On Wednesday morning we arrived at Appalachian Native Plants (ANP), a nursery located in Mountain City, Tennessee, and owned by J Jackson and Lindy Johnson. First, we had a tour through their facility, including a greenhouse packed with thousands of seedlings, and hoop houses filled with plants that had been up-potted. After much contemplation, I selected a number of flats of wonderful azaleas, like *R. vaseyi* (pinkshell azalea), *R. periclymenoides* (Piedmont azalea or pinxterbloom azalea), *R. calendulaceum* (flame azalea), as well as some Zo Warner natural hybrids. The latter are descendants of the Gregory Bald swarm resulting from Mother Nature's work, crossing at least four native species, including *R. cumberlandense*, *arborescens*, *viscosum*, and *calendulaceum*.



Paul Beck, Don Hyatt and George McLellan

One of the goals of ANP is to preserve native ornamentals, predominantly from the Southern Appalachians. To that end, J and Lindy have searched for plants, documented pertinent information, and mapped GPS coordinates for many notable specimens and populations. After collecting seed and growing these into sizeable plants, they proceeded to select superior forms to use as stock plants in their display area.

The seed from these specimens is used to grow transplant (plug/liner) and quart-size plants that are available to both the trade and to individuals. In this way, ANP has become a premiere source for 15 of our 17 native azaleas species, as well as for some very beautiful natural hybrid azaleas. They also grow wild-collected seed of many of the native

rhododendron species. One can purchase items at the nursery by appointment.



We were most impressed with the environmentally conscious use of geothermal energy to heat and cool the greenhouse. We applaud J and Lindy's dedication to providing education about the propagation and production methods for native rhododendron species.

After our time at the nursery, we drove a half hour to J and Lindy's home and walked through their gardens. What a treat! Seeing mature plants gave me an appreciation of the beauty of the blooms and an up-close view of the foliage, as well as the structure and size of the plants. I know this information will be helpful when it comes to planting our new acquisitions.

**Day 2**

Our first excursion into the wild started Thursday morning on Roan Mountain, a part of the Pisgah and Cherokee National Forests. This actually is not a single mountain, but a high ridge of peaks and gaps that extend over five miles and boasts the longest stretch



of grassy balds in the Appalachian Mountains. A bald is a mountain summit or crest that is covered primarily by native grasses or shrubs in areas where heavy forest growth would normally be expected. Throughout the Roan Highlands the elevation changes are fairly gradual, from 5,500 to 6,286 feet.

This area boasts one of the finest and most diverse stands of native azaleas anywhere in the world. Usually it is a sea of vibrant color during mid-June, but this

year peak flowering had passed. Our cooler-than-normal spring, followed by an abrupt, very warm spell had compressed the bloom time. Fortunately for us, the later-blooming forms were impressively showy, with brilliant yellows and oranges in many shades and combinations.

The morning air was very crisp and windy, necessitating multiple layers of clothing. From the parking lot at Carter's Gap, we followed a well-defined path leading to a part of the Appalachian Trail. To the west of this point are Roan High Bluff and Roan High Knob. But our plan was to head east where the *R. calendulaceum* are more abundant. We went through a short section of woods (Fraser's fir, red spruce), then entered a long stretch that is almost completely treeless. Soon after we entered the open area, Karel took out his bird-watching binoculars and spied a group of *R. calendulaceum* in a fairly remote area to the southwest, a cluster he had not noticed on previous trips. So he and George bushwhacked their way to the new find to record descriptions, take photos, and map the area using GPS.

Meanwhile, Don accompanied us to the east. We hiked across Round Bald, Engine Gap, and Jane Bald to Jane Gap, with panoramic views most of the way. Don pointed out some of the special forms of *R. calendulaceum* that have been given unofficial names



like 'Molten Lava', with its ruffled golden-orange flowers, 'Frilly Jane', in shades of apricot and golden-yellow, and 'Roan Buttercup', a compact, semi-dwarf yellow variety. After an hour we reached 'Big Bird' (one of my favorites), a clear yellow with the top petal frilled and overlaid with gold.

Ahead of us was Grassy Ridge, an area that is usually awash with the pinkish-purple flowers of *R. catawbiense* (Catawba rhododendron). The late freeze that season

had caused heavy bud damage, so the entire hillside was just green. We decided to head back. Hopefully, we will be able to return another time to see what is, typically, a magnificent display.

Along the way back to our car, we stopped to rest and have lunch on a rocky outcropping that had a spectacular view of the area to the south. By then it was toasty warm and we had had to shed a layer or two. As we relaxed, Don relayed some of the history of this mountain range, including the fact that the gneiss (pronounce 'nice') rocks we were sitting on were over a billion years old.

The small piece of the Appalachian National Scenic Trail (AT) that we had hiked involves a moderate climb; the walking sticks that Don had lent us came in handy in a few spots. The AT extends over 2,200 miles, following the ridgeline of the Appalachian Mountains from Mount Katahdin in Maine to Springer Mountain in Georgia. Thousands of species of plants and animals make their home there, including 2,000 that are considered rare, threatened, or endangered. We feel very grateful for all the resources that have gone into creating this fantastic hiking trail, and for the continued efforts to maintain it from groups that include a variety of citizen organizations, environmental advocacy groups, government agencies, and individuals, all coordinated by the Appalachian Trail Conservancy.

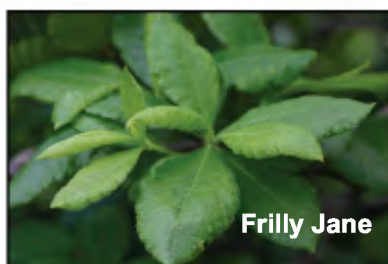
For dinner our group gathered at Suba's Restaurant in Mountain City, Tennessee, where we thoroughly enjoyed the Smoked Trout Cakes and the Salmon Oscar. Their handmade, mouthwatering desserts are a specialty. How can one resist Fried Apple Pie with Homemade Cinnamon Ice Cream, Bailey's Irish Cream Chocolate Torte, or Mile-High Coconut Pie? Suba's provides a truly fine dining experience!

### Day 3

On Friday we left Mountain City to travel along the Blue Ridge Parkway on our way to Franklin, North Carolina. We accessed the parkway near Blowing Rock, North Carolina, heading south. Shortly after entering the parkway, about Milepost 294, we stopped at the Moses H. Cone Memorial Park and spent some time in their gift shop. They have a tempting array of finely



Frilly Jane



Frilly Jane

handcrafted items of ceramic, wood, glass, fabric, and more, all attractively displayed. We were looking for a thank-you gift for a special couple, and this was a perfect place to make a selection. Then, back to the parkway.

The Blue Ridge Parkway is a scenic highway, linking two Eastern national parks: The Shenandoah and The Great Smoky Mountains. It has some of the highest mountains in Virginia and North Carolina, with elevation changes from 649 to 6,047 feet.. It has so much to offer vacationers: overlooks with wonderful views, waterfalls, hiking, art, music, camping, and, of course, a treasure trove of plants. But we were on

a mission, other temptations had to wait.

At Milepost 316 we made a little detour to Linville Falls. An easy hiking trail took us downhill to where we could see the waterfall from a good vantage point. Along the way, we passed a patch of *Galax urceolata* (wandflower), a delightful wildflower with spike-like racemes of white flowers and shiny, dark green basal foliage. There were scores of *R. maximum* (rosebay rhododendron), but none in bloom.

At Milepost 355 we turned into Mount Mitchell State Park, the highest point in the Eastern US at 6,684 feet. The cloud cover prevented a good view, but we did have enough light to take photos of some *Platanthera grandiflora* (purple fringed orchids), with their spikes of pinkish-purple and white flowers.

Along the edge of the road, from mMilepost 410 to 425, Don pointed out places where *R. vaseyi* can be found in many shades of pink, from pale to very dark. Since flowering time had passed, Paul and I



talked about returning to this area in early to mid-May of another year to see them blooming in all their glory. I especially would like to find one of the darkest pink varieties to photograph. Although *R. vaseyi* has a very limited natural range, restricted to a few mountainous regions in North Carolina, it grows well at lower elevations such as in our garden in Northern Virginia. We exited the Blue Ridge Parkway at Balsam Gap (Milepost 443) and headed to Franklin, North Carolina, for the evening to rest up for our next day's excursion.



Wayah View and Old Stone Tower

A short drive downhill took us to Wine Springs Bald where we were greeted with myriad forms of *Kalmia latifolia* (mountain laurel), along with several more types of *R. arborescens*. One of the latter had larger-than-normal flowers and curly lower petals. The plants in this area were so close together that it

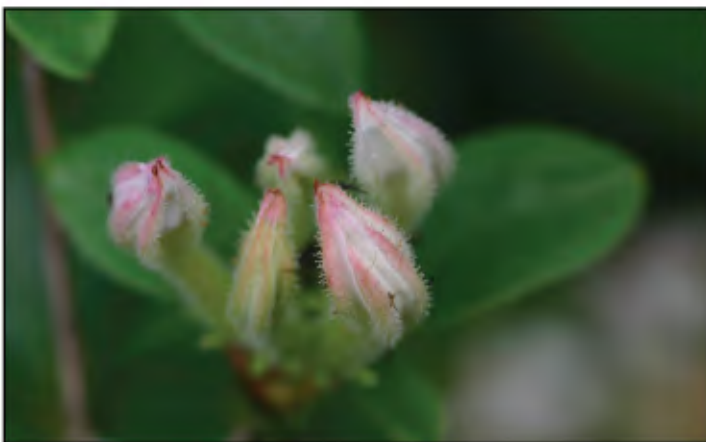
was difficult to wedge our way through to see specific specimens, but we persisted.

The afternoon schedule called for a trip to Hooper Bald, but predictions of heavy storms discouraged Paul and me from attempting it. The rest of the group decided to chance it and were able to keep ahead of the rain as they made their way to just past the Tennessee border. On their way back, they drove through the storm, but by the time they reached Hooper, the sky had cleared and they were able to make a preliminary trek in preparation for the work they had planned for the next day.

#### **Day 4**

Saturday we drove to Wayah Bald, which is located in the Nantahala National Forest near Franklin and is on the AT. On our drive to the top we stopped to walk a side path to check out a most unusual form of *R. calendulaceum* – a two-inch, hose-in-hose, colored apricot with a broad, gold blotch. We drove to the summit (elevation 5,342 ft.) and parked, then wandered around the periphery through a patch of *R. arborescens* (sweet or smooth azalea).

Walking down the road a little distance, we took a paved path to the Old Stone Fire Tower. Since it was a clear day, we had a gorgeous view from the tower of the Great Smokey Mountains in Tennessee and the rolling hills of Georgia. In the area surrounding the tower there was an impressive display of *R. arborescens*, their pink-tinged white with pink stamens and an intoxicating fragrance.



Kalmia on Wine Springs

#### **Day 5**

On Sunday morning, except for a little fog, the weather was inviting. So we traveled west along the Cherohala Skyway, with its ever-changing altitudes, abundant curves, and panoramic vistas. This area was somewhat familiar to us since we had taken part in 'The Great Azalea Planting' in the fall of 2011 (see *Journal American Rhododendron Society*, Vol. 66, No. 4, Fall 2012). On arrival, near Milepost 8, we walked up part of the quarter-mile, well-maintained path to Hooper Bald, and then followed our leaders through the woods



to the lower section of *R. calendulaceum* territory. This shortcut took us directly to ‘Hooper’s Copper’, whose huge blooms open yellow, but quickly turn a coppery-orange. This plant had been the first of the species there to be rescued from encroaching vegetation by a dedicated team of individuals and groups, led by Jim Brant and George McLellan of the ARS Middle Atlantic Chapter, and overseen by the U S Forest Service.

We visited other late blooming “old friends” while roaming the bald, gems like ‘Gold-10’, and ‘Hooper’s Pumpkin’. Lastly we came to a most striking specimen called, ‘Hooper’s Best Red’. What a surprise! We were thrilled with the opportunity to see the vibrant, dark red flowers that are atypical for the species. Knowing that the fall foliage is almost as spectacular as their summer blooms made me doubly glad that we had obtained some small plants of this form at Appalachian



Native Plants.

Although the rigorous hike up Gregory Bald would normally be the next stop on the schedule, the decision was made to forgo this three to four hour climb because it was thought unlikely that we would find plants in bloom. So we said our goodbyes and headed back east.

Our next destination was East Fork Nursery in

Sevierville, Tennessee. After taking a quick look at the road atlas to find the most direct route, we chose US 129. BIG MISTAKE—unless you are looking for a serious adrenalin rush. The longer we drove, the more closely the twists and turns occurred, and the more exaggerated they became. The biggest challenge was the first eleven miles within Tennessee, which is appropriately called “The Tail of the Dragon.” There are 318 curves, many of them S curves, within that short span; definitely not for the faint of heart.

We certainly did not realize on first setting out that this is considered THE premier thriller course for driving enthusiasts. This was a Sunday and weather conditions were ideal, so the motorcyclists were out in force. Unbelievably, many years ago this section had been posted at 55 mph. Today the limit is 30 mph, but we rarely made it to 20. Fortunately there were pull-offs at frequent intervals, so whenever we found ourselves holding back traffic we took the next opportunity to let others pass. A blink of the lights, a beep of the horn, or a wave of a hand expressed their appreciation.

Whew! Well, we survived Route 129 and arrived in Sevierville at the appointed time. Vivian Abney was there to greet us and show us through her East Fork Nursery. Although not usually open on Sundays, she had graciously agreed to let in several plant enthusiasts that day. Among her impressive offerings is a very large collection of deciduous azaleas, all grown from seed and tissue culture. She grows over 300 varieties. With Vivian’s help, I picked out 15 wonderful selections (that was all our already space-

**Sources for deciduous azaleas:**

Appalachian Native Plants  
676 Waddell Road  
Mountain City, TN 37683  
423-727-4264

East Fork Nursery  
2769 Bethel Church Road  
Sevierville, TN 37876  
865-453-6108



challenged vehicle could hold). One of my favorites is 'Memory of James Thompson'. This is an *R. austrinum* hybrid by Earl Somerville of Atlanta, Georgia. It is very fragrant, with large ball trusses of creamy-yellow flowers with a soft golden blotch, blooming early to midseason. The plant grows into quite a large specimen (14 ft. x 8 ft. in 20 years), and is hardy in Zones 6-9.

We were weary and ready to head home, but very glad we had taken the time to enjoy some of the sites where native azaleas can be seen in the wild.

**Conclusion**

I have heard some objection to using deciduous azaleas in the landscape because of their leafless winter condition. But I think their irregular branching habit really enhances the winter garden by providing architectural interest. They also offer a different color palette from our evergreen azaleas, and can be used in sunnier spots where the evergreens tend to languish. Many of the deciduous varieties have spectacular fall foliage that almost equals the impact of most flowers. Fragrance in some species and summer bloom times are other reasons to consider using them in your garden design.

Although we missed peak bloom time this year, what we did see made this trip most worthwhile. I can only imagine the magnificence of finding these plants in full flower.

We are most grateful for the company of our three guides as they led the way to sites and pointed out plants that we would most likely have missed if we had undertaken this expedition on our own. We recommend this journey to anyone who enjoys botanical excursions. If you would like information on this year's trip, please contact Don Hyatt at don@donaldhyatt.com.

*Carolyn Beck is a retired Registered Nurse and an active member of the Northern Virginia Chapter. She and her husband, Paul, are concentrating their garden efforts on the chapter's Legacy Hybrids (see NV-ASA.org for more information on our Legacy Project).*

**Join the Azalea Society of America**

The Azalea Society welcomes membership by anyone interested in azaleas, from all cultures and disciplines. We invite those who wish to learn, and those who know and wish to share their knowledge.

Member Name

Street Address

City, State, Nine-Digit Zip Code

Area Code and Telephone Number / Private ( )

E-Mail Address / Private ( )

Privacy Notice: Membership information is published in the society's membership roster and quarterly journal, *The Azalean*. Information may also be published in a password-protected online Roster available only to society members. If you mark ("X") private on your telephone number and/or e-mail address, it will only be used for official society business and will not be published.

Type of Membership:

- Individual (\$30 U.S., Canada, Mexico / \$40 International)
- Contributing (\$50)
- Supporting (\$100)
- Endowment (\$200)
- Lifetime (\$600 U.S., Canada, Mexico / \$800 International)

Chapter Affiliation:

- Alabamense (AL)
- Ben Morrison (MD)
- Lake Michigan (MI, IL, IN)
- Louisiana (LA)
- Northern Virginia (VA)
- Oconee (GA)
- Cape Fear (NC)
- Rev. John Drayton (SC)
- Southern California (CA)
- Texas (TX)
- Tri-State (IN, IL, KY)
- Vaseyi (NC, SC, TN)
- Central Carolinas
- At-Large (no affiliation)

Mail membership application form along with your check or money order to:

Paul Beck  
 ASA Treasurer  
 2963 Fort Lee Street  
 Oak Hill, VA 20171-1812

# Chapter News

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## **Cape Fear Chapter – by Matt Hunter**

This past season the Cape Fear Chapter has completed stage one of the landscape renovation of the Azalea Station Post Office in Wilmington, North Carolina. The renovation so far has included planting many donated Encore® Azaleas, several special elm and camellia specimens, and various perennials. We plan to accomplish stages two through four over the coming years by cooperating with several like-minded community organizations (garden clubs, nurseries, and county government).

Our next event is a club social at the New Hanover County Arboretum on May 6 from 6:00 to 8:00 pm. This social is open to all members and nonmembers. If you are in our area, please stop by and visit with us!

## **Central Carolinas – by Chris Wetmore**

### **Upcoming events:**

April 18, 8:00 am-10:00 am - Bartlett Arboretum Tour. Greg Paige, Arboretum Curator, will be giving a tour of Bartlett Tree Arboretum in Charlotte, which features a tree research laboratory and 350 rolling acres with several ponds.

April 25- Tour of Harrison Garden in Wingate, North Carolina. Chapter Members **Bob and Eve Harrison** have an extensive collection of evergreen azaleas and have been collecting for many years.

May 2, 7:00 am-1:00 pm - Public plant sale at the Charlotte Regional Farmers Market. This sale helps fund fees for speakers and our scholarship. Volunteers welcome.

May 16, 10:00 am-12:00 pm – Chapter meeting, CPCC (Central Piedmont Community College) Cato Campus. **Bob Head** of Head Ornamentals and Head's Select will give a presentation on plant hybridizing and answer questions.

## **Northern Virginia – by Barry Sperling**

The 2014 season ended in fine style as **Barb and John Kirkwood** invited us into their Great Falls, Vir-

ginia, home for the annual Holiday Social. Everyone brought dishes to share and after the dining and visiting they settled down to business. The new slate of officers was elected with **Rick Bauer** as the new President, **Lars Larson** Vice President, and Secretary **Susan Bauer**. Treasurer **Paul Beck** and Corresponding Secretary and Clipper Editor **Barry Sperling** agreed to continue their roles from the previous year.

Income from plant sales has again allowed us to make significant contributions in three areas: \$2,000 to Green Spring Gardens for a White Horticultural Center intern, \$1,000 to the Friends of the US National Arboretum, and \$500 to the Green Spring Gardens Title I programs.

We are looking forward to an active year again with member garden tours around May 3, the Green Spring Gardens Plant Sale in Springfield May 16, the cutting and plant exchange July 19, and the annual auction on September 26. Feel free to join us for these even if you aren't a chapter member at present!

## **Reverend John Drayton Chapter – by Linda Wood**

Each of our meetings begins with a wonderful meal together. We have some amazing cooks in our chapter, and it is always a treat to meet, eat, and find new recipes!

At our September meeting, President **Tom Johnson** gave a presentation on collecting azalea seeds, as it was the appropriate time of the year to do so.

At our October meeting, the members present shared a little about their connection to azaleas, i.e., how they came to love azaleas and how many or what types they have. It was interesting to learn about our membership and how varied their experience and knowledge is. Several members shared childhood memories of growing up with parents or grandparents who had azaleas.

In November, our speaker was Randy Howie from Hyams Garden Center and Accent Store on James Island. Randy shared his experience in the nursery setting and gave the backstory of what arrives at our local garden centers. We also began the discussion of tak-

ing a spring trip to visit azaleas in bloom outside of Charleston.

Our annual Christmas Party was held in conjunction with the Camellia Society of Charleston at the Magnolia Carriage House. We have many members in common, as the South loves azaleas and camellias!

In January, we had the pleasure of hearing **Ernest Koone** of Lazy K Nursery in Pine Mountain, Georgia, talk to our chapter about native azaleas. Perhaps we will see some of these on our proposed trip to Callaway Gardens. The group voted to send one \$1,000 to the Society to be directed to research.

#### **Texas Chapter – by Barbara Stump**

The Texas Chapter held their fall meeting at Nacogdoches County's newest lake, Lake Naconiche, on November 28, 2014. After planting azaleas and redbuds with civic groups (see article on page 93), a brief business meeting was held on site. Members were briefed on the upcoming convention in March 2015 and plant sale status. The following slate of officers for 2015 was proposed and approved:

President - **Mary Beth Hagood**

Vice President - **Bart Brechter**

Secretary - **Sherrie Randall**

Treasurer - **Don Parsons**

#### **Vaseyi Chapter – by Suzanne Medd**

On February 22, the Vaseyi Chapter had our first meeting for 2015. **Audrey Stelloh** gave an interactive slide show and led the discussion on deer-resistant evergreen plants for shade. Everyone has had deer eat different plants, so Audrey shared knowledge of which plants are the least likely to get nibbled, munched or devoured. Unfortunately, azaleas fall into that nibbled, munched and devoured category. At this time of year evergreen plants are her favorites, because winter can be so monochromatic with only gray and brown for months. There were over 200 color photos with a plant and nursery listing!

The last meeting was on November 9, 2014 at the Bullington Center in Hendersonville. Members and their guests shared a wonderful meal, then viewed the future Vaseyi Memorial Garden at the Bullington Center and discussed the fencing materials needed. Members voted to spend \$200 for the deer fence and plaque. Several members brought unusual seeds to exchange. **J and Lindy Jackson** brought a tray of beautiful seedlings that are a cross of American and Japanese deciduous azaleas.

### **Ten reasons to apply organic mulch around your plantings:**

**Holds moisture in the soil.**

**Discourages weed growth.**

**Organic mulch breaks down, adding texture to the soil.**

**Stops soil from splashing onto foliage.**

**Moderates fluctuating soil moisture temperature and moisture.**

**Spotlights plants.**

**Defines planting beds.**

**Lessens the impact of footsteps on the soil.**

**Minimizes erosion.**

**Creates a uniform, more attractive landscape.**

*By Connie Cottingham, Athens, Georgia*

# Society News

## ASA Financial Position December 31, 2013

### INCOME STATEMENT Year 2013

#### INCOME

Azalean Income	430
Dues Income (Life + Regular)	14,952
ARF Gifts	5,040
Gifts to ASA Fund	3,885
Investment Income	10,193
Seed Exchange	263
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>34,763</b>

#### EXPENSES

Azalean Expenses	17,778
Chapter Dues Expense	2,255
Dues Expense	338
Website Expense	130
ARF Grants	0
Bank & PayPal Charges	48
Other Expenses	970
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>21,519</b>

**Income - Expenses** 13,244

### BALANCE SHEET December 31, 2013

#### ASSETS

Checking	4,602
PayPal	2,275
Investments	152,356
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>159,233</b>

#### LIABILITIES AND RESERVES

Operating Fund	14,568
General Endowment	71,125
Research Fund	73,539
<b>Total Liabilities and Reserves</b>	<b>159,232</b>

### OPERATING & ENDOWMENT FUND INCOME STATEMENT Year 2013

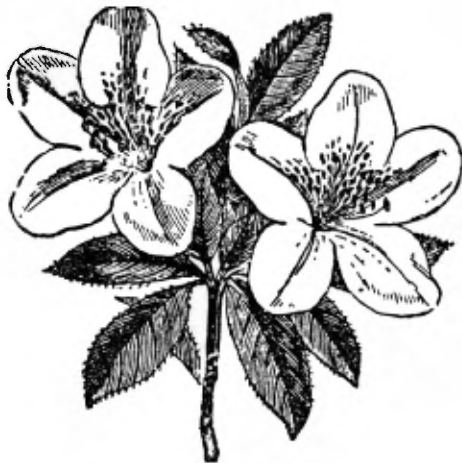
#### INCOME

Azalean Income	430
Dues Income	14,952
ARF Gifts	0
Gifts to ASA Fund	3,885
Investment Income	1,335
Seed Exchange	263
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>20,865</b>

#### EXPENSES

Azalean Expenses	17,778
Chapter Dues Expense	2,255
Dues Expense	338
Website Expense	130
ARF Grants	0
Bank & PayPal Charges	48
Other Expenses	970
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>21,519</b>

**Income - Expenses** -654



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# Today, My Favorite Glenn Dale Azalea Is...

by William C. Miller III, Bethesda, Maryland

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The development of Ben Morrison's Glenn Dale hybrid azaleas was the most ambitious project in ornamental horticulture ever undertaken by the Federal government. The goal was to develop a race of large-flowered azaleas resembling the Indian hybrids of Southern gardens that would be well suited for landscape use in the Washington metropolitan area. Ben Morrison was a credentialed landscape architect (M.L.A., Harvard, 1915). He had more than a casual grasp of the characteristics of size, shape, and hue, as well as a well-developed appreciation for detail. This program began in 1929 and lasted 25 years, but was put on hold during the Second World War. The program involved hundreds of crosses from which more than 70,000 seedlings were evaluated, and resulted in 454 introductions.

One of my favorite Glenn Dale hybrids is 'Ambrosia' (Fig. 1), which Morrison described as:

*Erect and somewhat spreading habit, to 8 feet. Leaves medium green, semi-pubescent. Flowers 2 to 5 in head, 1-3/4 to 2 inches across, Begonia Rose [RHS 50B, deep yellowish pink, WCM] becoming, with age, pale apricot in effect; very distinct color. Mid-April. (Fig. 1)*

Indeed, the color is unusual, and the quality is difficult to capture either on film or as a digital image. Differences in exposure and time of day can result in significantly different images of the same subject. Also, I would point out that the eight-foot height figure assumed a ten-year-old plant. The accompanying image of me standing next to a 46-year-old plant at Ten Oaks nursery shows that 'Ambrosia' and other Glenn Dale hybrids are capable of achieving considerable size given sufficient time (Fig. 2).

The formula for 'Ambrosia' is 'Vittatum' × HEA No. 34. 'Vittatum', the seed parent often incorrectly shown as 'Vittata Fortunei', was credited by Morrison as being the probable source for much of the variability demonstrated by the "white with stripes" Glenn Dale hybrids. HEA No. 34, the pollen parent, was a personal curiosity for many years. I could not find anyone who

had it, and there was no indication in the relevant literature as to its nature or its origin. It appeared solely and unheralded as a pollen parent in working papers from the Glenn Dale Plant Introduction Station. After many years, a significant clue was found in a paper that Morrison wrote about the R. Kent Beattie Kurume hybrids. Morrison lamented that H. E. Allanson, a colleague and administrator in the Bureau of Plant Industry, was the only individual to receive a complete collection of Beattie's Kurumes. In the Kurume discussion in Wilson and Rehder (1921), the Kurume cultivars are numbered. Number 34 is 'Suetsumu' or 'Flame', which Galle describes as a strong red [RHS 45C] with a darker blotch [RHS 46A]. The conclusion is that HEA No. 34 is 'Suetsumu' from H. E. Allanson's Kurume collection.

At the Glenn Dale station, a Bell number was used to represent a population of seedlings derived from a single cross. Later, when seedlings were selected for propagation, each received its own Bell number. The seed lot for 'Ambrosia' was B13577. We know that 'Medea' (B35376, a dull red purple) and 'Portent' (B32379, magenta flaked white) are sister seedlings, because records show that they are derived from the same seed lot. The unique Bell number assigned to 'Ambrosia' in May 1939 was B32378, and PI 163899 was the Plant Introduction Number assigned in April 1948 when the decision was made to proceed to introduction. The Glenn Dale records indicate that 'Ambrosia' was distributed only once, in 1949.

I am not aware that any formal work has been done to evaluate the cold hardiness of the Glenn Dale hybrids as a group. However, it is worth mentioning that both Tadeusz Dauksza (Orland Park, IL) and John Migas (Saugatuck, MI) report that they have and like 'Ambrosia'. When asked for specifics John replied, "I do grow 'Ambrosia' and it does very well for me. At this time, I have about 50 plants growing in three-gallon containers. The soft pastel salmon/pink blooms make it an attractive plant, but the early bloom can be damaged by late frost. All in all, it is a keeper."

It is likely that many of the 454 Glenn Dale hybrids are sufficiently cold hardy to be enjoyed



Fig. 1 – ‘Ambrosia’, a very popular, large flowering, and early blooming Glenn Dale hybrid azalea that has an unusual color. The image and permission to use it were obtained from Dan Krabill. Thanks to Carolyn Beck for assistance in locating the image.

in the Northeast and the Midwest. When asked for a comment about his general experience with the Glenn Dale hybrids from the nurseryman’s point of view, John replied “Over the past 15 years, I have collected well over 250 Glenn Dale azaleas and have had success with all (so far). Many of these plants can take colder temps than originally reported. My temps have been down to at least -13° on many recorded dates and the plants still have bloomed.”



I began by stating that today my favorite Glenn Dale is ‘Ambrosia’. Next month, my favorite may be ‘Oriflamme’, ‘Wildfire’, ‘Cinderella’, ‘Kobold’, or ‘Dayspring’. Many of the Glenn Dales are, indeed, very special, but those are other stories for another time.

*William C. Miller III is a recipient of the Brookside Gardens Chapter’s Frederic P. Lee Commendation (1988), and is twice the recipient of the ASA’s Distinguished Service Award (1995 and 2002). He was chairman of the ASA’s Glenn Dale Preservation Project, and a co-chairman of Dick West’s Ten Oaks Glenn Dale Project. He is past president of the Brookside Gardens chapter, a former vice president of the ASA, a past member of the ASA board of directors, past co-chairman of the ASA’s membership committee, past chairman of the ASA’s public information committee, a long-time ASA member, and a frequent contributor to **The Azalean**.*

## References

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4. Lee, Frederic P., *B. Y. Morrison and His Azaleas*, **The AZALEAN**, Vol. 10, No. 3, September 1988, pp 60-62.
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Fig. 2 - Behind the six-foot pink azalea immediately to my right, looms an 18-foot specimen of ‘Ambrosia’. The photo was taken by the late Dr. Bob Hobbs during the 1995 ASA National Meeting tour of the Ten Oaks Nursery arboretum in Clarksville, Maryland.



# The Cosby Garden

## Richard Bauer, Yorktown, Virginia

Twenty-two miles to the northwest of Richmond, Virginia, is a beautiful, private garden on 79 acres of rolling countryside in Rockville, Virginia. This idyllic property is the home of **Elizabeth, Madeline, and Roy Cosby**, and it is where they created their beautiful azalea garden.

These siblings grew up in a family of eleven children in eastern Henrico County, near Richmond. They had an early interest in azaleas; the first azaleas were planted at this family home. At that time it was difficult to find unusual cultivars as there were few commercial listings of azalea varieties. They also found it difficult to find and purchase Japanese varieties after WWII.

In 1958, Elizabeth and Madeline purchased a home near Oxford. They began their garden with transplants from the family home in Henrico County, to which they added a number of different cultivars, primarily *Kurume*, *kaempferi* and *poukhanense*. In the late 70's, after having exhausted space on the available land at their home in Oxford, VA, Elizabeth and Madeline were anxious to expand their small collection.

In 1980, they wanted to move to a more tranquil environment which would provide a better home and more land for their plant collections. Joined by their brothers Andrew and Roy, they purchased 59 acres in Hanover County, Virginia, and completed their beautiful



home in 1983. They also developed and expanded their garden. Many of the initial plantings were the azaleas moved from their home of birth and their home in Oxford, where they had resided for twenty-five years. They experimented with different ways of preparing plant beds and found that transplanted azaleas thrived in raised beds prepared with peat moss and deteriorated

oak leaves. An additional purchase in 1984 added 20 more acres to this property. Their younger brother Algar joined them later, after the death of his wife.

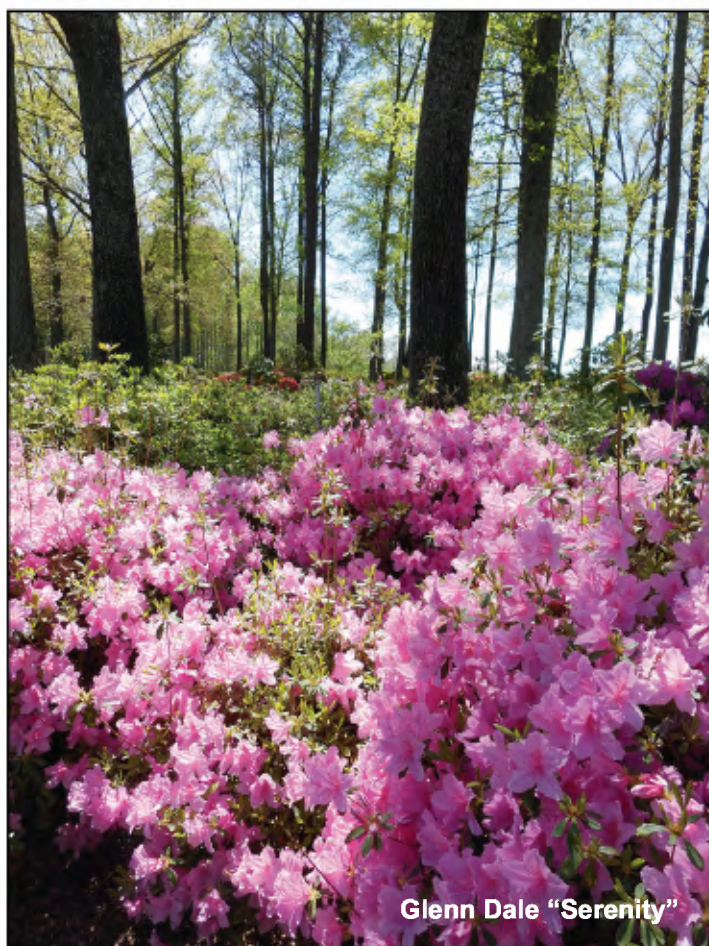
Somewhere around 1983, their brother Roy, a Catholic priest started St. Patrick's Parish in Chancellorsville, Virginia. Two of his parishioners were Don and Alvera Hager, who were operating Hager Nurseries, Inc., an azalea propagating company. The Hagers increased Roy's interest in azaleas and donated many plants to the church landscaping. Later, Roy started St.

Matthew's Parish in Spotsylvania Courthouse, which was closer to the Hager's nursery. So they once again became members of his parish and once again donated azaleas to plant around the church.

By this time, Roy was spending his vacation time with Elizabeth and Madeline at their home and improvising irrigation for the first raised beds of azaleas. Don Hager shared his experience with the use of spinners for sprinkling and propagation of azaleas



by cuttings. Fortunately, when the Cosby home was built in 1983, a 12' x 24' greenhouse was attached to the house by a walk-in lower level. This began years of shared cuttings from Don Hager's vast collection of 3,000 different cultivars. The Cosbys wanted to ensure that in their garden, Glenn Dales especially would be available for the next generation to enjoy, as well as other hybrids that would not be available commercially. They planted a number of varieties from early bloomers such as Glenn Dale 'Serenity' to late bloomers such as the Satsukis. This provided them with an extended period of beautiful blooms in their garden. They originally started propagating ten of each cultivar and planted them in groups of ten. As beds were completed, they began new beds, growing the garden to its current size of 11 acres.



Sadly (according to the Cosbys) when Don Hager retired, the Cosbys, after years of propagating, had collected only about 1,600 different varieties of azaleas in 90 raised beds.

Elizabeth and Madeline Cosby retired in 1998 after 45 years running Lighting and Supply Company, Inc., which Elizabeth founded, and Madeline helped grow

into a successful business. This gave them more time to spend on their azalea gardens.

In 1999, they began a collection of rhododendrons, mainly from rooted cuttings purchased from Van Veen Nursery in Portland, Oregon, and other nurseries. These rooted cuttings were planted in the center of the azaleas beds, requiring meticulous care prodding them on to survival. The rhododendrons are now large and showy.



By the time 2009 came around, they began to develop trails in the woody section of the property on land used by Thomas Jefferson and George Washington as a road to Charlottesville, Virginia. Remnants of the old road can still be found on parts of this land. Along these trails, they planted native azaleas. Visitors are often treated to a tour by golf cart through the gardens, including the wooded trails. The members of the Northern Virginia Chapter of the ASA have enjoyed the garden during the blooming season.

The Cosbys have done an excellent job of cataloging the cultivars in their collection. While they don't have an accurate count of the total plants, they estimate the number to be over 10,000. These include over 1,800 different varieties of hybrid azaleas, 50 different native azaleas and over 300 types of rhododendron.

Roy Cosby received his degree in Electrical Engineering from Virginia Tech in 1944 (among several degrees he has earned). He used his engineering skills to implement many creative features on the property, including the irrigation system, system for opening and closing the main gate, and an open geothermal system for heating and cooling the home.

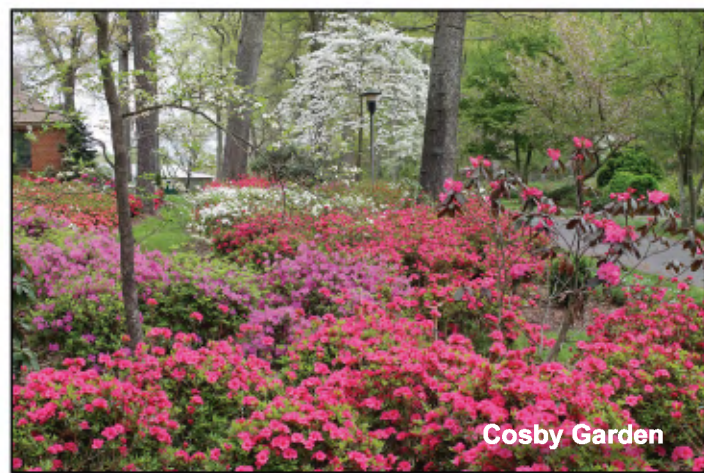
In 2013, in support of the Legacy Project, the Cosbys created five new beds dedicated to the cultivars of hybridizers, many of whom are/were members of the



Roy Cosby with seedlings



Rhododendron "Phyllis Korn"



Cosby Garden

ASA and the Northern Virginia Chapter in particular. In developing these beds, the Cosbys deviated from their previous practice of planting 10 of each variety to increase the number of different varieties in the beds. They currently host McDonald, Holly Springs, Stewart, Bowie Mill, Klimavicz, Marshy Point, Harris and Aromi azaleas and continue to add plants to their collections.

Elizabeth, Roy and Madeline **Cosby** have no children to inherit the property and no family members interested in maintaining it. They have ensured that their beautiful property will be maintained and available to the public in the future by donating it to the Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden. It will be known as the Lewis Ginter Nature Reserve. ASA members will also have the opportunity to visit this beautiful garden during a 2016 ASA/ARS Convention optional tour.

**Richard (Rick) Bauer** is retired from the US Army and private industry and has been a member of the ASA since 2002. He is an ASA Director and President of the Northern Virginia Chapter. He and his wife **Susan** live in Yorktown, Virginia where they are expanding their azalea gardens with emphasis on Legacy hybrids (<http://www.nv-asa.org/legacies>).



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# Texas Chapter Supports Local Beautification Projects

Barbara Stump, Nacogdoches, Texas

The Texas Chapter held their fall meeting at Nacogdoches County's newest lake, Lake Naconiche, on November 28, 2014. Chapter members joined other civic groups (Keep Nacogdoches Beautiful (KNB), representatives from the Nacogdoches Garden Capital of Texas Committee, Texas Forest Service, and volunteers) in planting a colony of 50 deciduous



*Rhododendron austrinum* azaleas and a dozen redbud trees near the new Rotary Pavilion. This event was the second mass planting event the chapter supported this fall. The first celebrated Texas Arbor Day (November 8) by planting 90 Chinese fringe trees as street trees along the edge of Banita Creek Park, just south of the Nacogdoches Farmer's Market. Chapter members helped volunteers from city staff, the Stephen F. Austin State University (SFA) baseball team, SFA Gardens, and volunteers, including a 14 at-risk youth.

Both events were planned under the KNB and Garden Capital of Texas Committee's "Give Thanks for Our Parks" initiative to remind people that the best time to plant azaleas and trees is in the fall in our climate (in Zone 8b spring is short and by May typically passes into a long summer of 80°-100° F.) The chapter supports these events, and your chapter can do

the same in your local area.

On April 3, 2013, Nacogdoches was named the Garden Capital of Texas by a resolution of the Texas State Legislature. To see why our town qualified for this designation, see the text of the resolution ([legiscan.com/TX/text/HCR24/2013](http://legiscan.com/TX/text/HCR24/2013)). Our residents have been boldly and resolutely gardening for over 200

years, and continue the tradition today by adding both gardens and trails in the city and county. The local committee's mission "is to educate, engage and inspire Nacogdoches area citizens to become involved in beautifying their community green spaces."

*Barbara Stump is past editor of The Azalean and on the editing committee. She co-chaired the national ASA conventions in Nacogdoches, Texas, in 2007 and 2015. She earned her MS degree in Agriculture, with thesis, for the "Site Analysis and Design of the Ruby M. Mize Azalea Garden." She now keeps the azalea garden database updated, keeps track of a number of grant and endowment accounts for SFA Gardens, and is a research associate for development, as well as volunteers for the Nacogdoches Convention and Visitors Bureau and the annual Nacogdoches Azalea Trail.*



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# Pot Bound! Handling Overgrown Container Plants

Don Hyatt, McLean, Virginia

Azaleas and other plants grown in containers often become “pot-bound” when they are long overdue for transplanting. Pictured is a flat of 32 rooted, deciduous azalea cuttings photographed in late spring that had reached a desperate stage. These cuttings were approaching 30 inches tall and were still in two-inch pots! They should have been repotted at least a year ago, but that didn’t happen. The root systems were too small to support plants of that size, so those cuttings needed to be watered twice a day just to keep them from wilting. A quick inspection of the roots showed a mass so dense that it looked almost like compressed coconut fiber. New roots had no place to grow and continued to wrap around inside those small pots. These azaleas were definitely pot-bound!

One of the most common problems with plants grown in containers is that people often do not know how to transplant them correctly. Many gardeners carefully take the plant out of its pot and place it directly into garden soil without disturbing the root system at all. That is actually bad for the plant in the long term. The container plant often will behave as though it is still in the pot. The roots continue to grow in the porous potting medium surrounding them and never venture into the surrounding soil. Plants can sometimes languish for years or even die if they do not become established. To encourage roots to grow into the new soil, the surface of the root ball should always be “roughed-up” with a fork or a trowel to get those roots started into the new soil. That will help the plant establish more quickly in its new location.

Plants that are pot-bound need special attention in order to grow well and become established. With very dense root systems such as those of the native azaleas illustrated in this article, the root systems may need some drastic treatment to break them apart. It may seem ruthless, but it is important for long-term success.

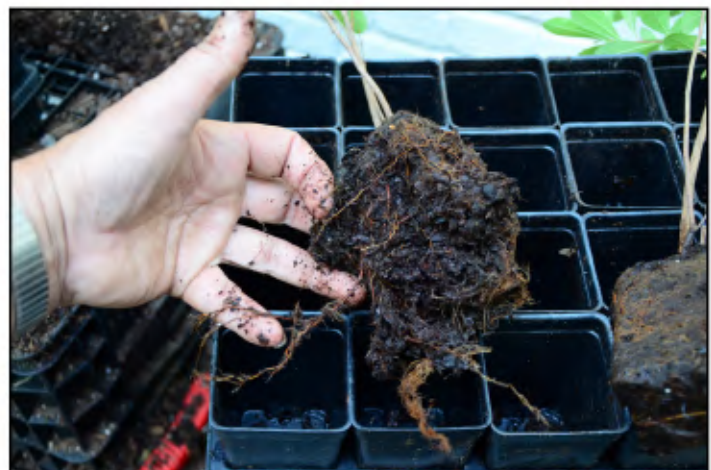
The first stage is to remove the plant from the pot and carefully inspect the root system. There will usually be some larger roots visible near the surface, so try to tease those out with a fork, or try to unwind them with your fingers in order to separate them from the root ball. This is not an easy task, and requires some careful study to decide which way the roots are growing. Undoubtedly, there will be some damage to roots. Often, it cannot be helped. By separating larger roots and spreading them as widely as possible in the fresh medium, the resulting root system will be much larger, closer to what it should be at the plant’s current stage of growth.



Flat of 32 overgrown native azalea cuttings



Pot bound azalea has dense tangle of roots



Roots are teased apart so they can establish in new soil

The smaller roots will be able to grow back quickly, even if they were damaged. Be forewarned that some root systems will be so dense that it may be necessary to use a saw or knife to try to break them apart. It may seem like it will kill the plant, but to do nothing is guaranteed disaster. The roots would stay in that tight mass and might never work their way into the surrounding soil.

Those severely pot-bound azaleas in the two-inch pots would have had a difficult time if they were planted directly into the garden. They were moved up to gallon pots filled with a porous, well-drained medium consisting of equal parts of peat moss, perlite, and pine bark fines. A little

### Cut Back the Top

Whenever there is damage to a root system, it is important to cut back some of the top branches to keep the plant in proper balance. The greater the loss of roots, the more of the top should be pruned. Most of the native azalea cuttings in this original flat needed to be cut back by almost half, and some needed even more severe pruning than that. Heavy pruning is preferable in late winter to early spring (before new growth starts), but when rejuvenating a pot-bound plant, there may be little choice. When people try to rescue large plants from a construction site, there is usually significant root loss because only a fraction of the full root system is dug up. For native azaleas, some people just try to get the crown of the plant and cut back all the main branches to stumps. The plant is "heeled in" by placing it in a bed of well drained, rich, porous soil to recover for a couple of years before planting it in a new location. Native azaleas will branch freely from old canes, especially if pruned when dormant. Be careful pruning evergreen azaleas and large leaf rhododendrons, since many of them will not regenerate well from bare trunks and will need some of their foliage in order to grow and become established.

coarse sand was added to improve soil texture. They needed time to recover from their transplanting ordeal while they were forming new roots, so I initially placed the pots in a location with high open shade but no direct sun. They no longer needed watering twice a day since they did have some roots, and those could draw moisture from the surrounding potting medium. While they were forming new roots, I did mist the foliage once or twice a day, similar to the way cuttings are treated during the rooting process. The medium was kept moist but not wet since too much water can encourage root rot.

It is wise to avoid fertilizer at first since it can burn those delicate new roots as they begin to grow. After a month or two, it is

OK to apply a dilute fertilizer solution or some slow-release fertilizer pellets to the surface of the soil to encourage growth, but be careful. Always err on the light side with fertilizer, especially while the plant recovers, and never apply fertilizer late in the season since it may initiate late-season growth that can lead to winter damage. As the plants begin to send out stronger new growth, the amount of direct sunlight can be increased. After several months, they can be treated like any other container plants.

Some of those native azaleas were ready to plant out in the garden by fall, but most were held over until spring. They are now ready to plant in the landscape, or will be moved up to larger containers as needed. They could probably stay in those gallon pots for two years if necessary, but they will eventually need to be transplanted. If not, they could become pot bound again, and it would be necessary to repeat the process once more!



Repotted azalea cutting, ready to grow

*Don Hyatt is a retired teacher who has maintained an interest in plants of all kinds since the age of 3. In recent years, he has focused his efforts on documenting and preserving our native azalea species, and enjoys sharing his passion for rhododendrons, azaleas, and wildflowers through his writings, lectures, photographs, and his website ([www.donaldhyatt.com](http://www.donaldhyatt.com)). He is co-chair of the joint convention of the ASA and ARS planned for April 20-24, 2016, in Williamsburg, VA.*

