

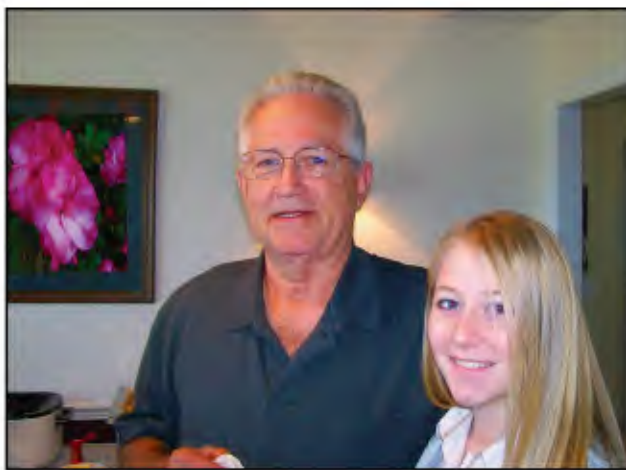
Buck Clagett

Barry Sperling, Alexandria, Virginia

Not far across the Potomac from the Northern Virginia Chapter lives an accomplished hybridizer who has been active for 50 years. Derwood, Maryland resident Buck Clagett has produced a large number of beautiful evergreen azaleas under the Bowie Mill designation, many available from White's Nursery in Germantown, Maryland.

His goals have been to produce flowers with more petals and more colors than have been available. With Tina's Whorled and Tissie in his garden, I will attest to Clagett's success in those goals.

Both sides of his family had an interest in horticulture and growing seedlings so it is no wonder that he tended in that direction. His Aunt Dorothy knew Dr. Wilson from the USDA, a friend of Ben Morrison. Dr. Wilson brought to her some original Glenn Dales: Festive, Fashion, Corsage, etc. About 1962 Buck started a collection from Lyon's Nursery: Hahn's Red, Ambrosia and Martha Hitchcock. Some Gables came from a Hyattsville nursery and Gold Cups from Nuccio's in California.



Clagett and Elizabeth Ann.

Within a few years he started azaleas from seed, with the first crosses attempted in the late '60s. Stacy Lynn (a very small, early, strong pink double) and Tissie (a very late, large flowered strong purple hose-in-hose) were his first successes. Currently, seedlings are started under lights in his basement just after Christmas, then after being transferred to his cold frames they spend the rest of their lives outdoors. The cold frames are 2' x 6', glass topped

and shaded. Clagett doesn't use a greenhouse. Plants are sprayed three times a day inside the cold frames in the summer. In addition to a seven-foot deer fence (and Liquid Fence®) he sprays for insects and poisons slugs.

Looking back, Buck especially enjoyed spending time with George Harding and Bob Stelloh. He was in on the early activity of the ASA about 1978, attending a meeting prior to the first official meeting. This early meeting included Bill Parsons, Nate Fitts, George Harding, Frank and Mike White and Bob Mallet. Soon after, this continued with the first official meeting of the ASA, which was attended by Buck, George Harding, Frank White, Emile Deckert, Bob Mallet, Ty Spencer, Bill Parsons, Warren and Judy Grooms and Alice Holland. At this meeting they collected information about suppliers and made the first logo (a flower and a leaf).

Buck Clagett has been involved with the rich history of azaleas, from hybridizing to founding the ASA and is a great resource for our little hobby. If you would like cuttings from his collection he invites you to contact him at bclagett2@verizon.net.

Barry Sperling is the Corresponding Secretary and newsletter editor for the Northern Virginia Chapter.

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