

# Chapter News

## Central Carolinas Chapter

*Chris Wetmore, President*

April 11 meeting: Central Carolinas had an off-topic meeting. Ron Dollyhite, Chair Horticulture Technology and Campus Gardens at Wilkes Community College, gave an interactive presentation on grafting apple trees. Participants took home apple trees they had grafted. These same grafting skills can be used on other types of trees such as Japanese maples.

May 16 meeting: The chapter was very fortunate to host **Bob Head** who gave an expert level crash course on soil preparation and fertilizing azaleas. Bob also covered hybridizing.

September 19 meeting: **Joe Coleman** made a presentation on natural hybrid azaleas at Hurricane Creek. The meeting will be 10am-12pm at Central Piedmont Community Col-

lege Cato Campus in the Horticulture Building. 8120 Grier Rd Charlotte, NC 28215. Guests are welcome to attend.

November 21 meeting: We'll hold the Central Carolinas Annual Banquet. Stan Southerland will be giving a presentation on heat-tolerant rhododendrons. There will also be a silent auction with many rare azaleas, rhododendrons, and camellias available to those present. The meeting will be 10am-12pm at CPCC Cato Campus in the Horticulture Building, 8120 Grier Rd Charlotte, NC 28215. Guests are welcome to attend.

## Northern VA Chapter

*Barry Sperling, Corresponding Secretary*

Late July saw the Northern Virginia Chapter reconvene for the annual cutting exchange, plant exchange, general meeting and food extravaganza.

After a large lunch and a meeting involving details for the operation of the upcoming annual convention, the cuttings and plant offerings were distributed and everyone got what they had their eyes on as the selections covered many tables and many hybrids. The club welcomed people from the Ben Morrison Chapter and **Joe Coleman** made his annual visit from Georgia.

**Susan Bauer** has taken over the complicated process of digitizing the old Azaleans and getting permissions for this from the writers and photographers involved. **Paul Beck** has programmed our chapter web site to allow these to be viewed, as well as the non-trivial task of putting the whole ASA membership database online and retrievable by mem-

▼ **David Meadows**, **Carolyn Beck** and **Lars Larson** inspect cuttings during the Northern VA Chapter meeting. **Larry Martin** is shown in the background.



Photo Christopher Wetmore

▲ Ron Dollyhite demonstrates grafting.

▼ Bob Head addressing the Central Carolinas Chapter.



Photo Christopher Wetmore



Photo Barry Sperling

bers. He's also getting ready for the web site to host the data for the 2016 convention.

We're looking forward to meeting for a lecture in October and then again for the annual Holiday Social in December, closing out another successful year.

## Texas Chapter

*Sherrie Randall, Secretary*

Texas Chapter members sold evergreen and deciduous azaleas at the Nacogdoches Farmer's Market Saturday, September 19th. The Market is located at the old "hitch lot" in historic downtown Nacogdoches.

The 200+ leftover plants from the ASA 2015 convention plant sale were potted up and grown up since late March. Members are hoping to encourage, and educate gardeners in the benefits of planting azaleas in the Fall instead of Spring. Since the evergreen plants are cuttings from SFA's Ruby M. Mize Azalea Garden, this also gives the local community an opportunity to purchase and grow plants not easily available at local nurseries.

Evergreen choices ranged from the diminutive 'Chinzan' to the gardens' signature 'Koromo-shikibu'. Handouts will be available with growing tips, as well as information on joining the Azalea Society. This is our first try of this approach, and hope to target people who actually grow plants and enjoy those that come from our local community. Watch for news in the next issue on Bart Brechter's Blog idea to keep our large Texas area connected.

## Vaseyi Chapter News

*Audrey Stelloh, President*

Our September 27th meeting held a joint meeting with the Southeastern Chapter of the American Rhododendron Society. Our speaker was **Betty Montgomery**, a Master Gardener and author and member of both Vaseyi and SE-ARS. Betty writes the monthly garden article in the Hendersonville Times News. She has 40 years of love and labor in two spectacular, artistic, Zone 7 gardens in the Carolinas. One garden in South Carolina and one in North Carolina. Betty recently published a book called "A Four Season Southern Garden" and will give us a presentation based on her book. After the presentation we held a live auction plant sale of miscellaneous plants brought in by members. The charming and witty Doley Bell ran the auction and proceeds will be split between the two chapters.

Our November 8th meeting will start with our annual pot luck and BBQ social. **J Jackson** (ASA President) and **Lindy Johnson** (ASA Seed Exchange Chairperson) will give a presentation detailing how to grow native azaleas from seed. People can bring seeds to share. For information, contact Audrey Stelloh at alexadogg@gmail.com.

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*Chapter News submissions and photos may be emailed to theazalean@gmail.com.*

# Membership Note

*By Chris Wetmore*

Greetings Everyone,

I recently accepted the position of ASA Membership Chairman. In each upcoming issue of *The Azalean* I will focus on items that can help chapters grow or retain membership. This does not mean that I am going to ask chapters to go door to door or require residents in each town to register in an Azalea Society "draft." I will just be reaching out to members in the Society to provide insight as to how an event or process works for other chapters. Sometimes this will come from my own experiences, but most often it will come from others.

The first item I want to visit is plant sales. Quite often when people think plant sales they think raising money. The biggest benefit to these plant sales is often overlooked. **Rick Bauer**, with the Northern Virginia Chapter, discusses plant sales below.

"We seem to be having the most luck with the plant sales, since it makes us known to the public. We have a membership corner with a DVD playing showing our activities, flyers for the ASA, membership flyers and flyers for the 2016 convention as well as one on Azalea Care. We capture the email addresses of customers and ask if they'd like to receive our monthly chapter email. If so, we add them to the mailing list. The first time I mail to them I do it in a separate email, thanking them for buying plants from us, telling them why they are receiving the email and telling them they can be taken off the mailing list by contacting me. Also, we have picked up a couple of members by giving guests free plants at meetings. They were so impressed they joined."

Rick shared this information with me not when I asked how his chapter does plant sales, but when I asked him "What event that you held, regardless of how many years ago, yielded the most new members?" Now, for your sales can it be expected that you will be able to have a DVD player set up? Not necessarily, and that is not the intended message.

What I hope those reading this will take away the message to get out there and start small. You will figure out what works in your area; the important thing is to get out there. Your first and second and even third sale will not be perfect. You will always have something you can improve upon. Just stay positive and remember to have fun!