

and supplies. But honestly, with the relentless heat of our summers in Texas, I have at times reverted back to domed propagation trays, as my greenhouse is not climate controlled. During one of our potting-up-parties, Dr. Creech checked out my greenhouse and noted it was too shady. After a phone call to Eric, our tree removal expert, one water oak was felled and hauled to the burn pile. When husband went to town to run errands, I grabbed the reciprocating Milwaukee saw, got on top of the tractor port and lobbed off as many branches as I could reach and had them hauled to the burn pile before he returned. (‘Mum’s the word’ fellow chapter members, he thinks we’re too old to be climbing on structures....not me.) Over time Mother Nature happens, and we must be flexible.

My enthusiasm for propagating and growing up plants has in no way diminished from my first success. It pleases me to be able to share “new” plants with friends and fellow gardeners. I hope “newbies” to the azalea world will give it a try!

Sherrie Randall grew up in Zone 22, Southern California, then moved to and lived in Zone 5, Colorado, for 20 years until retiring from Lockheed Martin. She and her husband moved to Zone 8b, Nacogdoches, Texas, where they are the owners of *The Blueberry Place*, a pick-your-own blueberry farm. She is secretary of the Texas Chapter.

Editor’s note: We have asked **John Migas** to write an article for **The Azalean** on “aftercare” for newly rooted cuttings and very young azaleas. Watch for this in a future issue.

Warning! Mulch with Care

By Donald Voss—Vienna, Virginia

Mulching offers many advantages for the health of your trees and shrubs, but there can be serious problems. Driving around our area, one may see mulch piled as high as five or six inches around the trunks of trees and shrubs. That endangers the health and potential longevity of the plants, including azaleas. The following recommendations are extracts from the Web-sites of three well-known horticultural organizations:

- The Morton Arboretum—Pull mulch away from the bases of tree and shrub trunks, creating a donut-hole. Mulch piled against the trunk creates ideal conditions for insect pests, diseases, and decay.
- North Carolina State University—Pull the mulch 1 to 2 inches from the base of the plant to prevent bark decay.
- Rutgers University—Don’t build a mountain of mulch, piled high against a tree trunk; this does not kill a tree immediately—it results in a slow death.

Don Voss is a retired economist, a life member of the Northern Virginia Chapter of the ASA, and regularly volunteers at the US National Arboretum Herbarium.

New Members

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The Azalea Society offers membership to any one with an interest in azaleas, from home gardeners, collectors and students to plant professionals. Local chapters have social activities, garden tours, meetings and plant sales of unusual varieties. National conventions offer garden tours, talks by well-known azalea authorities, plant sales, and the opportunities to make and renew friendships. *The Azalean*, our quarterly journal, has timely informative articles about azalea culture, hybridizing, propagation, garden design, new introductions and chapter activities.

**To join the society
or for more information,
visit our Web site at
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