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Charles Andrews of Cumming, Georgia, is vice president of the ASA, a member of the Vaseyi Chapter of the ASA, and a former member of the Oconee Chapter. He is a plant lover in general, but his heart is with azaleas. He enjoys writing and speaking on azalea topics, contributes articles to *The Azalean*, and serves on the journal's Editorial Advisory Board. He also serves as president of the Azalea Chapter of the ARS. For over 35 years, Charles has been studying American deciduous azaleas. He and like-minded "azaleaphiles" spend many hours hiking in the field each year trying to better understand the distribution, habitat, characteristics, and dynamics of this amazing plant complex, primarily found in eastern North America. He believes these plants deserve more scientific study and horticultural emphasis. Charles is working to make accurate information on the history, identification, distribution, and culture of native azaleas more available.



Photo William C. Miller III

◀ The entrance to the visitor center at Garvan Woodland Gardens gave us an elegant hint of what was to come in the Garden of the Pine Wind during the 2018 convention. (See related article, p. 28).

# Recruiting New Members

*Membership Chairman Robert Thau—Jasper, Texas*

Recruiting and maintaining members is a continuing issue faced by the society and its chapters. I have had great success in signing up new members in the Jasper area and want to share some approaches that have worked for me.

- ▶ I approached the Jasper Master Gardeners about two years ago and offered to do a workshop and give a tour of my garden. The goal was to provide greater exposure to the Azalea Society of America. This was the start of many talks and workshops and has resulted in more society visibility and more new members.
- ▶ I encourage members to contact local garden clubs and master gardeners and introduce them to the ASA. You will often find that they never knew there was an azalea society. They also are frequently surprised at the number of cultivars there are.
- ▶ I give tours of my garden and collection, which totals over 800 cultivars with more on the way. I tell them how they can propagate and care for the azaleas and do a "hands on" demonstration for those who are interested. Those who are ASA members—or become members at the demonstration—are given a cutting from my garden, and they provide me feedback on their propagation results. The word is getting out. I've been getting calls from people I don't know, wanting to see my garden.
- ▶ Our chapter has also joined the Jasper Chamber of Commerce and they have joined the ASA. They have been a great help in promoting the ASA.
- ▶ We also worked to get Jasper designated as an Azalea City in time for their 30th Year Festival. The local news and radio also played a big role with coverage and news articles. I walked into my bank and the teller knew about my garden and the ASA and asked me how to join. She signed up and got a free azalea for joining.
- ▶ I was asked to sponsor a 7th grader, who loves plants, for a junior high school Study Fair for gifted and talented students. I worked with her to teach her the basics of growing and caring for azaleas. She had a display of several azaleas, a poster and pictures of some of the new varieties, and ASA membership information trifolds. When people came by, she would explain her display to them. She received an award for her display. I was proud of her. She and her mother are now members of the society.
- ▶ One member was excited about propagating azaleas but had no place to get cuttings. By being a member, I told her I will supply her with cuttings. She received about 125 cuttings to place in her newly constructed hot box.

These approaches have worked for me. I know there are many more ways of recruiting new members. If you have other successful approaches, please let me know so that I can share them with other chapters. Contact me at: [rwillbubbathau@yahoo.com](mailto:rwillbubbathau@yahoo.com).