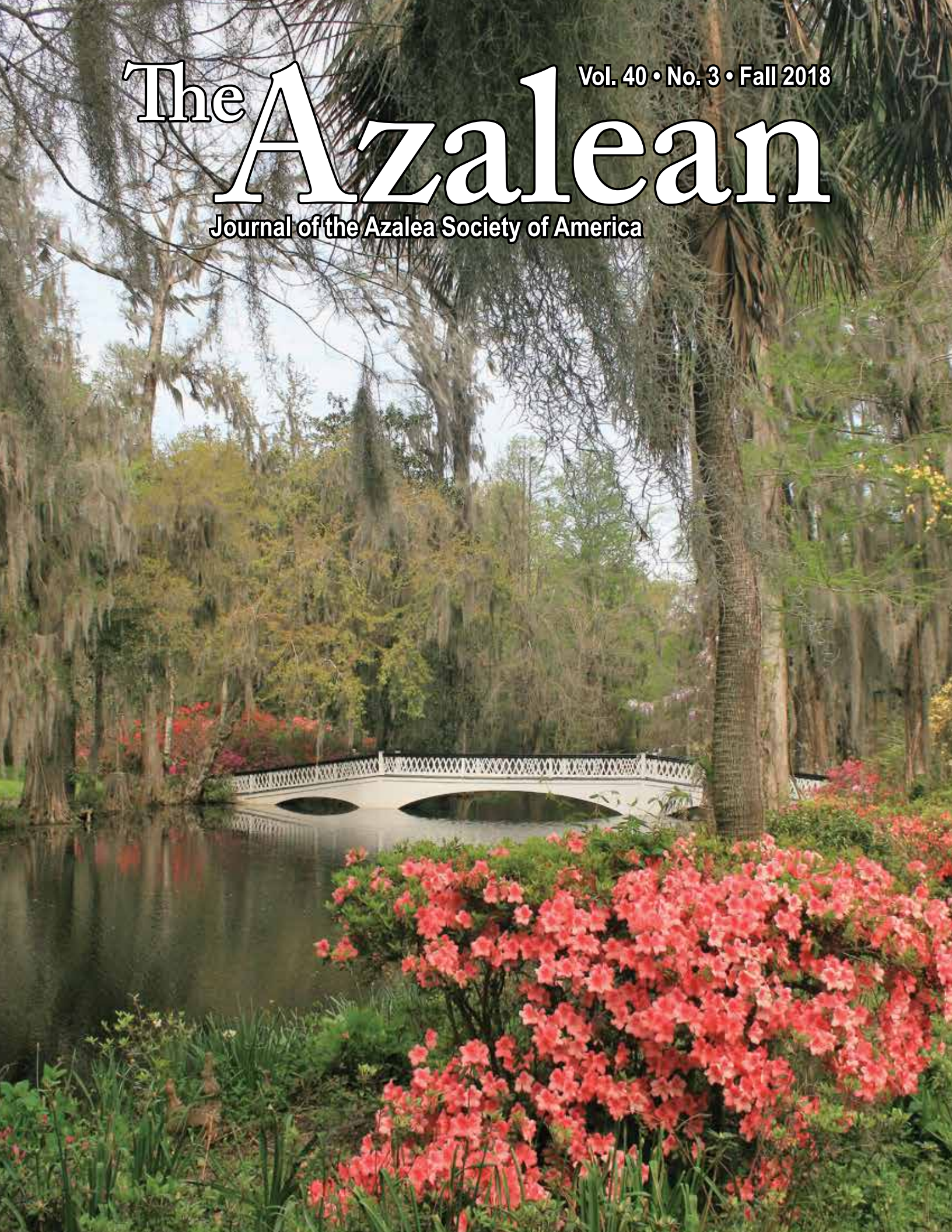


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# The Azalean

Journal of the Azalea Society of America



# President's Letter

Rick Bauer—Yorktown, Virginia



While writing this message, I went back to my previous messages where I told you of things that were in the works. I'm happy to report that many of the things we have been working on to improve the society have reached fruition or are very close. In June I joined several other society members in Robbinsville, NC where we recognized the city as an Azalea City. For the last 10 years, society members Jim Brant and George McLellan have led an effort to restore the native azaleas on Hooper Bald. As a result of many hours of work by members of the ASA, the American Rhododendron Society and other groups, the Bald is at the point that the folks in Robbinsville and Graham County, North Carolina made it the centerpiece of their Graham County Native Azalea Festival. We're hoping to continue work with Graham County and Robbinsville in the future to make this an ongoing event.

I also reported about the success of the Little Rock convention and the Azaleas 101 workshop. Part of the fees for the workshop paid for a membership in the ASA. Since that time, the Arkansas members have been working to establish a chapter. I'm happy to report that we just approved the by-laws for the Arkansas Chapter. I'm excited about the energy and enthusiasm displayed by the organizers. With over 75 ASA members in Arkansas, they are starting out with the makings of a strong chapter. We see a lot of potential in the Arkansas Chapter and wish them the best.

Robert Thau, president of the Texas Chapter, has been promoting azaleas in Jasper, Texas. In working with the Master Gardeners, the Chamber of Commerce, city manager and other local entities, Robert was instrumental in gaining Azalea City status for Jasper earlier this year. State-funded beautification efforts with azaleas are now also underway. Enough new members have signed up in the Jasper area to start a new chapter. I hope to report on the formation of the Texas Forest Country Chapter in my next message.

We appreciate all the work done by society volunteers, especially those in leadership programs at the chapter level. We have recently completed a manual with suggestions on running chapters and chapter programs. It contains "good ideas" provided by members who have successfully implemented them in their chapters previously and gained new members. We encourage you to check this document out, on our ASA website at: **About the Society>Chapters>Resources**. We also encourage members to submit other good ideas for incorporation in future updates. Hopefully it will also encourage other society members to step forward and take a leadership role in their chapters.

Coming up with good ideas for chapter programs is always a challenge. I have spoken in the past about "purpose." Like each of us, chapters need a purpose. Certainly, preserving and promoting azaleas is a reasonable basic purpose, but how do you build your program from this? The Legacy Project can provide a structure to chapter activities. Program events which could easily be derived from sponsoring Legacy Hybrids include propagation workshops, speakers on the hybrids and hybridizers, articles for publication, raising plants for sale to the public or for introduction to public gardens (i.e., establishing "Legacy Gardens") and documenting and maintaining hybrid data on our website. We currently have 15 hybrid groups in the project and encourage more folks to sign on to sponsoring additional groups. If you'd like more information on the project, it is on our website under Legacy Project. You can also contact me directly if you have any questions at [president@azaleas.org](mailto:president@azaleas.org).

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

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## On the Cover

This romantically inspired bridge at Magnolia Plantation and Gardens is one of the most photographed elements of that garden and is surrounded by magnificent mature azaleas. Visit this wonder during the 2019 ASA Convention, hosted by the Rev. John Drayton Chapter and Magnolia Plantation and Gardens. (See related article, p. 65)



# American Azaleas, Part II

## Misinformation, Unanswered Questions, and Future Research Needs

By Charlie Andrews—Cumming, Georgia

Editor's Note: This is Part II based from the keynote presentation given at the ASA Convention in Little Rock, AR, April 7, 2018. Part I is in the Summer 2018 issue of *The Azalean*, p. 40-45.

### Misinformation

Much misinformation on our native azaleas exists in the literature and has since the beginning. Let me give just a few examples:

### The Name Azalea

Linnaeus first coined the term *Azalea* as a new species back in 1735 because he thought his new species required a dry, arid habitat.<sup>1</sup>

*Azalea* from new Latin from ancient Greek (*azaleos*, dry) because it grows in dry soil.

Wiktionary, 3/22/2018

Linnaeus found these plants high in the treeless Lapland Alps in what he said were sandy, rocky, dry places. Since half of the ground was still covered in snow in July with water running in rivulets through the snow, how he determined it was arid is unclear.<sup>2</sup> With his limited exposure to azaleas, Linnaeus did not realize that almost every azalea prefers constantly moist, not wet soil.

### Rose Colored *Rhododendron arborescens*

Frederick Pursh introduced *R. arborescens*, perhaps our best white deciduous azalea, as a new species in 1814 and stated he had seen it in the wild and in Bartram's garden outside Philadelphia. He described the species as having rose-colored flowers.<sup>3</sup> [See Photo 1]

This flower color description was repeated by other botanical authors for almost 100 years, including the well-respected John Torrey, Asa Gray, John Claudius Loudon, and Alphonso Wood. Do you think these authors had actually seen a living plant in bloom? It is not a rare species. Both Michauxs, André and son, François André, had earlier described the fragrant white azalea that each found on mountain stream sides, but neither gave it a botanical name.<sup>4</sup>

### *R. canescens*, the Mountain Azalea

Pursh introduced another point of confusion when he took Michaux's southeastern *R. canescens* and applied it to high elevation plants in the Blue Mountains of Pennsylvania. This confusion lasted for over 100 years.<sup>5</sup> [See Map 1]<sup>5</sup>

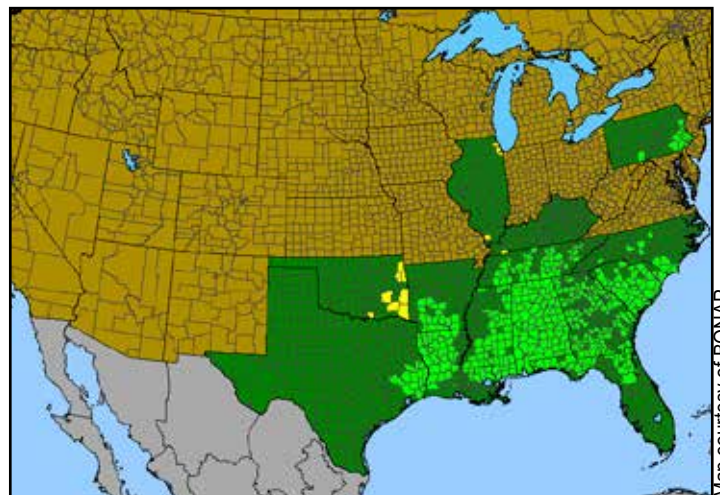
He apparently was not aware of the new species *Azalea rosea* named by Loiseleur-Deslongchamps in



Photo Charlie Andrews

▲ Photo 1—This is the typical flower of what Frederick Pursh called the rose-colored blossoms of *R. arborescens*. The flowers can occasionally have a yellow throat or blotch, and be flushed with some pink, usually as buds are opening. Pink and light yellow blossoms are found on rare occasions and may be a sign of hybridization.

▼ Map 1—Note the supposed but doubtful distribution of *R. canescens* in Pennsylvania. This southeastern species is sometimes called the mountain azalea possibly because it has been confused with the more northern and higher elevation *R. prinophyllum*.



Map courtesy of BONAP

1812. Loiseleur's species is now named *R. prinophyllum*. It is generally not heat tolerant and resides mostly in northern climes or high elevations from western Virginia northeastward. There are, as you may know, disjunct populations in Arkansas and southeastern Missouri. It

is because of this confusion between prinophyllum and canescens that you may sometimes see *R. canescens* called the mountain azalea.

## Species maps

Species distribution maps often contain errors in both directions, incomplete and false positives. You will find, for example, *R. calendulaceum* throughout Alabama and *R. arborescens* on the Alabama Coast. These errors occur because, with little or no verification, the mappers rely on previous published flora and herbarium specimens.

*R. calendulaceum* is often reported in the state of New York, but no one can or has pointed to indigenous plants. *Calendulaceum* is rare even in Pennsylvania, the most northern distribution of the species. This repeated piece of misinformation originated from a 1749 Latin description of a yellow azalea on property on the Hudson River. No one else has been able to offer evidence of *calendulaceum* growing as far north as New York. Was a yellow azalea dug elsewhere and brought to the Coldenham estate in New York?<sup>6</sup>

## *R. canescens*, Not in the Piedmont

Clement Bowers, whom I mentioned previously in Part I, was a horticulturist from New York. In his 1936 book and 1960 revision as well as in letters for the 1952 *The Azalea Handbook* and Frederic Lee's 1958 *The Azalea Book*, Bowers argued that *R. canescens* should not be called by the common name Piedmont azalea.

He asserted time and again, in total error I have to say, that *R. canescens* is limited to the Coastal Plain from South Carolina southward and westward.<sup>7</sup> This New Yorker did not have much field experience in the Southeast. If he had, he would have known a very large portion of the biomass of *canescens* resides in Georgia, Alabama, and Tennessee above the Coastal Plain.

I am glad to see that the most used common name today for *R. canescens* is the Piedmont Azalea, which is the most common azalea in the Southeast Piedmont from Texas to North Carolina. To call this species the Florida pinxter as Bowers suggested is quite misleading. Many if not most of the pink azaleas in Florida are pink tetraploids, probably a color form of *R. austrinum*.

## When a Hybrid is Not a Hybrid

While the possibility of natural hybrids makes species identification difficult to impossible, it is also true that we have misidentified plants as hybrids when they are just species showing off their variability. Two examples will suffice. Polly Hill introduced the Choptank Hybrids. The original plants came from between Dover, Delaware, and the headwaters of the Choptank River.

She transplanted them in her garden in Wilmington, Delaware, and collected and propagated open pollinated seeds. She showed a particularly attractive form with some pink in the flowers to Henry Skinner, and he thought they were hybrids of *R. atlanticum* crossed with *R. periclymenoides*.

We now know that *atlanticum* is a tetraploid, *periclymenoides* is a diploid, and the offspring are almost

always triploid. Recent tests to date have shown Choptank Hybrids to be tetraploids, and we have more field experience to know pink is not uncommon in *atlanticum*.

'Snowbird', a cultivar at the Biltmore Estate was said to be an *atlanticum-canescens* cross, yet tests show it to be tetraploid. Pink does not automatically mean hybridization with *R. periclymenoides*, or with *R. canescens* in the southern portion of the Coastal Plain.

In southern Alabama and into Georgia there are azaleas that were called *R. alabamense* or *alabamense* hybrids. You, of course, know the story of John Thornton, Ron Miller, and others doubting this and finally with enough field work and lab research discovering a new tetraploid species, *R. colemanii*. However, there are still *R. alabamense* labels today at Callaway Gardens in front of *R. colemanii* plants.

## Will the Real Tetraploids Please Stand?

I have mentioned ploidy several times. Ploidy has to do with the number of sets of chromosomes a plant or animal has. You have two. Plants can have two, three, four, five, six, or more. Rhododendron chromosomes are very small, so small they can only be seen with an electron microscope. Even then they are extremely difficult to visually count accurately.

The first studies made mistakes. *R. calendulaceum* and *R. canadense* were declared tetraploids, meaning they had twice the normal number of chromosomes. *R. atlanticum* and *R. austrinum* were said to be diploid.

With advanced technology we now know *atlanticum*, *austrinum*, *colemanii*, and *calendulaceum* are tetraploid. *R. canadense* is diploid.

## All Flower Buds are Chestnut Brown

In Kron's revision of *Pentanthera* are interesting statements on azalea flower buds. This caught my eye because I have looked at flower buds as one of many characters to help distinguish one species from another. Some are lanceolate; some are quite ovoid. *Vaseyi* flower buds are globose and look like musket balls. Some have pubescence. Some have cilia along the bud scales, and in some cases the cilia are glandular. Some have dark bands

▼ Photo 2—Too many references simply state native azalea flower buds are ovoid. Some, like *R. canescens* are much more ovoid than others.



Photo Charlie Andrews



Photo Charlie Andrews

▲ Photo 3—*R. canescens* is also usually covered with fine soft hairs. *R. periclymenoides* buds are usually not as fat and usually not pubescent.



Photo Bethany Plyler

▲ ▼ Photo 4 & 5—These distinctive winter flower buds of *R. viscosum* and *R. calendulaceum* (below) are not chestnut brown. Winter buds can aid in species identification.

along the top of the bud scales. [See Photos 2 & 3]

I find a variety of colors, fairly consistent to the species. Yet, in every case, Kron describes the flower buds as “chestnut brown.”<sup>8</sup> The only place I have consistently seen chestnut brown native azalea flower buds is on herbarium sheets of dried specimens. [See Photos 4 & 5]

### Can't Tell *austrinum* From *canescens*

More examples of misinformation exist. We shall end, however, with this old wives tale. How often have you heard it said when the plant is not in bloom it is almost impossible to distinguish *R. austrinum* from *R. canescens*? In fact, it is simple and easy. New growth on *austrinum* is always glandular. New growth on typical *canescens* is almost always eglandular. I will explain the almost part later.



Photo Charlie Andrews

## For Now, We See Through a Glass Darkly: Unanswered Questions

We now move from misinformation to another issue: things we don't know or don't understand about this complex group of plants. In addition to the puzzlement of what should be the best division of our azaleas into species, we still have many other unanswered questions.

### ► How did *atlanticum* hide so long?

Of historic interest is *R. atlanticum*. It grows in the Coastal Plain from southern New Jersey down to Georgia. This is an early blooming, low-growing, highly colonizing, fire-adapting plant that can cover an acre or more with its' runners.

It had to have been stepped on by thousands of settlers and soldiers from Jamestown, Charlestown, and many settlements up the coast and along the King's Highway. Yet, it was not recognized as a species until 1917, probably being confused with the later-blooming *R. viscosum*.

### ► Why does *R. occidentale* fail on the East Coast?

The only native azalea on the West Coast is *R. occidentale*. Though the typical form is a white flower with a yellow blotch, there are very attractive multi-colored forms. We have never been able to successfully grow this species in the east. The reason remains elusive. Climate? In the west, it grows on the coast and as high as 9,000 feet at Donner Pass. In the east, we fail north and south. Soil? What special conditions might it need? Great Britain seems to succeed with this species.

### ► Where are *R. austrinum* and *R. atlanticum* triploid hybrids?

We know *calendulaceum*, *austrinum*, and *atlanticum* are tetraploid, and when they pollinate a diploid azalea the result is almost always a triploid. Many natural triploid hybrids with *calendulaceum* have been found. Almost no triploids in areas of *austrinum* and *atlanticum* have been discovered. Is this because of a difference

in the tetraploids? Is it because we simply have yet to recognize a possible natural hybrid and send a sample for testing?

► **Yellow River vs. Escambia River *R. austrinum***

In the lower section of the Yellow River in Florida, the tetraploids are all pink. Going up river, a transition eventually occurs with a mixed area of pink, white, and yellow. Farther up only yellow *austrinum* are found. The Escambia River is not far away, but the situation is quite different. Here, *austrinum* occurs in mixed colors all along the river: yellow, pink, white, and multicolored. Change in acidity does not seem to explain this difference.

► **Is *R. canadense* really an azalea (or is it even a *Rhododendron*)?**

We have always known the delightful Rhodora, popularized by Emerson in his poem, was unique. Alarm bells went off at the 2013 joint ASA/ARS convention in Asheville when Jason Lattier, one of Dr. Tom Ranney's graduate students presented results showing *R. canadense* appears to have a base chromosome number of 12, not the uniform base number of 13. The sampling covered multiple locations across the geographic distribution. If this holds true, it begs the question: Should *canadense* be considered an azalea? Is it even a *Rhododendron*?

► **Should *vaseyi* be considered one of our azaleas?**

*R. vaseyi* is another plant that we know is different. In the 2005 revision of *Rhododendron*, Loretta Goetsch et al. moved *R. vaseyi* out of *Pentanthera*. In their analysis, *vaseyi* was more closely related to plants formerly in *Menziesia* than our other American azaleas.<sup>9</sup> If true, this places some doubt on our even calling *vaseyi* an azalea.

► **How does color relate to species?**

When is a blotch a sign of hybridization or introgression? Is the pink tetraploid in north Georgia *R. calendulaceum*? Is the pink tetraploid in the Florida Panhandle *R. austrinum*?

### Recent Research/Discoveries

Since we have known about our native azaleas for over 300 years, we may tend to think we know them well. While questions remain as we still see through a glass darkly, in fact, we are learning more every day.

### New Species

*R. eastmanii* was declared a new species in 1999. For years it was said to be a disjunct group of *R. alabamense*. The aforementioned *R. colemanii* sat quietly in the Red Hills section of Alabama until someone finally realized *R. alabamense* grows in different habitats. It became a new species in 2008.

### Pink Tetraploids = *R. austrinum*?

In Florida, John Kunkle Small, Henry Skinner, and all others have assumed any Deep South pink azalea was *R.*

## Notes on Introgression

Introgression is the infiltration of the genes of one species into the gene pool of another, usually through backcrossing of an interspecific hybrid with one of its parents.

**Upward introgression:** Introgression from diploids into species of higher ploidy, commonly thought of from diploids to tetraploids (via fertile triploids).



▲ Photo 6—Above is an example of possible upward introgression, from diploid to tetraploid. DNA analysis may be able to verify the conjecture.

**Downward introgression:** Introgression from polyploids into species of lower ploidy, commonly thought of from tetraploids to diploids (via fertile triploids).



▲ Photo 7—Above is a Cherokee County Georgia diploid (repeatedly tested) that has morphological features of *R. calendulaceum*, a tetraploid: large flowers, wide petals, flat open face, orange blotch. There were many triploids in the immediate area, a sign of *R. calendulaceum* x *R. canescens* hybridization, thus suggesting possible downward introgression from tetraploid to diploid.

*canescens*. Detailed field examination recently has revealed them to be wrong. Ron Miller discovered the pink tetraploids that in every other aspect are identical to *R. austrinum*.

## Can1 and Can2, Two Southern Pink Diploids

Even more recently as Ron Miller explores the rivers, fields, and woods with an eagle eye, he has discovered that there are two types of southern pink diploids. We call these Can1 and Can2.

Can1: This is the typical *R. canescens*. It has pink to white flowers with glandular hairs on the flower tubes and often twisted, revolute petals. New growth is eglandular, distinct from *R. austrinum*.

Can 2: Then in eastern Texas, Ron discovered pink azaleas with glandular new growth. To his surprise, ploidy tests showed these plants to be diploid. Looking much like *canescens*, these Can2 plants reside in a moister habitat, tend to have broader petals, and are quite stoloniferous. Can2 plants are predominant to the west in eastern Texas and northern Louisiana. They occur only rarely eastward where Can1 dominates. Should Can2 be considered a new species?

## Ploidy Research

Recent ploidy research has opened our eyes to a better understanding of possible species and hybrid relationships. It was the 2007 research of Jeff Jones, another of Dr. Tom Ranney's graduate students, that revealed *atlanticum*, *austrinum*, and *calendulaceum* are tetraploids with twice the usual number of chromosomes.<sup>10</sup> Soon, the aforementioned *colemanii* was added to the list.

John and Sally Perkins joined with a team at the University of Coimbra in Portugal in an ongoing multi-year study of *Rhododendron* ploidy. By testing hundreds of cultivars and wild plants, and the Perkinses making crosses with parents of known ploidy, they have come up with some general ploidy rules. Their ploidy research is a presentation in itself, and I am anxiously awaiting their publications. Here are just a few derived observational rules:

- diploid x diploid = usually diploid
- tetraploid x tetraploid = usually tetraploid
- diploid x tetraploid = usually sterile triploid
- tetraploid x diploid = usually failure
- fertile triploids can occur but are rare
- triploids can produce diploids, triploids, tetraploids, pentaploids
- In diploid x tetraploid  $F_1$ 's, offspring tend to look more like the tetraploid parent

## New Research Needed

That was an overview of recent research. So, what is needed to better understand these wonderful plants?

## Field research

We need more field research. We need boots on the ground, studying populations in *situ*. Too much of the previous research results was based on herbarium specimens that do

not and cannot accurately represent the entire populations of live plants.

## Applied Multimedia Technology

We need a modern replacement for herbarium specimens as the primary source of data. Using dried specimens was advanced technology in the 16th century. They show only a snapshot or two in the annual cycle of the plant. Much is lost in the dried evidence. A specimen may not represent the typical population or the peak bloom and thus may be misleading. With such scant evidence, the plant may be misidentified by the author and those who examine it.

I am not suggesting we eliminate herbarium specimens but supplement them with 21st century multimedia technology with databases of morphological characters and habitat, GPS records, and digital habit, landscape, and both macro-lens and microscopic images.

## More Ploidy Testing

We need much more ploidy testing, especially on wild plants, to better understand what is happening between our tetraploids and diploids. We need to find more fertile triploids and analyze the population around them to better understand how these triploids naturally occurred. We need to find further evidence of downward introgression and upward introgression from tetraploid to diploid and vice versa. (See sidebar examples.)

## Hybridization Research

We need more hybridization research. Systematic hybridization by humans can help us better understand what has been and is going on in nature.

## Extensive DNA testing

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, we need extensive DNA research on our native azaleas. Such studies will require careful controls to assure large quantities of samples, known provenance of the samples, known character differences among and within populations, and geographically diverse populations. It is my hope that from these studies we can learn how related our 17 species really are.

Our ASA Research Fund can help support such studies. Your contribution can help. See information on the ASA website: <https://www.azaleas.org/research/arf-mission/>

I hope you now see our native azaleas are indeed a very complex group. We still have much to learn about them. Thank you for indulging me with my love of these beautiful azaleas.

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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 is also immediate past 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.



*Rhododendron occidentale*

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ARS Website: <http://www.rhododendron.org>

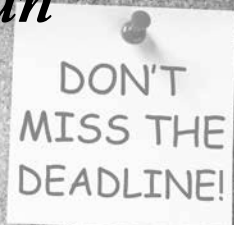
## Deadlines for input for *The Azalean*

April 1—  
Summer 2018 Issue

July 1—  
Fall 2018 Issue

October 15—Winter 2018 Issue

December 1—Spring 2019 Issue



# Chapter News and New Members

## Alabamense Chapter

*Amanda Wilkins, President*

The Alabamense Chapter has been moving steadily through the sweltering Deep South summer punctuated by *Rhododendron prunifolium* and our other Rhodie favorites. A June Trip to Mt. Cheaha to look for the Cumberland Azalea, *R. cumberlandense*, was a success and we were able to witness some of the gorgeous blooms. The misty altitudes gave an air of mystery and adventure to the morning and we were glad to have visitors from other ASA chapters tag along (please see the Davis Arboretum's Facebook page for more photos)! Looking forward, we are planning to get a trip together before the end of the year and have a few more trips planned for 2019! Please stay tuned!

## Arkansas Chapter

*Ronnie Palmer, President*

Our first meeting was June 23, 2018 for a cutting party at Azalea Hill Nursery in Pine Bluff. There were twenty attendees. The cuttings were taken from specimen plants scattered throughout the gardens. A few deciduous cuttings were taken, but it was slightly late for these. Gerald Klingaman drove down from Fayetteville to show us how to get cuttings to root and grow. He used a sand/peat moss medium. A rooting hormone was used. As of early September, several participants reported good success.

At a short meeting Ronnie Palmer was elected president. Steve Brizzi of Springdale is our vice president. Bob and Cheyenne Benbow are the treasurers. Donna Palmer is acting secretary until our fall meeting.

Steve Brizzi took the lead on getting the chapter by-laws put together. We are now an official chapter with 77 members spread across the state.

The fall meeting on October 2 with a plant sale with about 50 cultivars that will hopefully add a few dollars to our zero balance.

Arkansas Chapter welcomes new Arkansas members Mitch Mortvedt of Gilbert, and Ann Kendrick, Hot Springs National Park.

## Ben Morrison Chapter

*Diane Reinke, Secretary*

As of June 2018, the Ben Morrison Chapter was pleased to sign up 11 new members in May at an open-house at White's Nursery in Germantown, Maryland. Many thanks to Fred Newlan for coordinating this event.

Chapter members, joined by some members of the Northern Virginia Chapter, enjoyed a picnic, cutting exchange, and plant auction, graciously hosted by Carol Segree on June 30. Though the weather was sweltering, all had an enjoyable afternoon.

While en route to Carol's, some folks stopped off at the home of ASA members Jerry and Faith Bange, who were hosting an open garden day on June 30. Jerry and Faith

specialize in daylilies. Their garden was in peak bloom, with a multitude of colorful daylily cultivars and other plants.

After arriving at Carol's, everyone enjoyed a delicious lunch. A fun plant auction followed. Plants were donated by those who attended and by White's Nursery. Various azalea cuttings were also available. Carol's beautiful garden was a delight to see. After the auction, everyone gathered in Carol's lovely air-conditioned kitchen for an informative demonstration by Barry Sperling, Northern Virginia Chapter, of Mike Creel's method of rooting azalea cuttings. Mike's method uses a soil mixture and cut-off drink bottles with screw-on tops. A big thank you to Carol, Barry, and all who helped to make this event a success.

## Louisiana Chapter

*Allen Owings, President*

The chapter met on Wednesday September 19th for our quarterly meeting at Mike's Catfish in Amite, LA., with 21 attending. We celebrated Larry Brown's 86th birthday and Margie Jenkins' 97th birthday with a beautiful cake provided by Buddy and Dixie Lee. President Allen Owings gave the final report from the national meeting held in Arkansas that was financed by the Louisiana Chapter. Our treasury balance is \$11,347. We also discussed upcoming gardening events: the SE LA Nursery Association and LSU AgCenter field day

▼ Photo 1—Larry Brown, (l) with wife Flo (m) and Margie Jenkins (r) recently celebrated birthdays at the Louisiana Chapter's September meeting.



Photo: Allen Owings

in Hammond on October 4th, and the Fall Flower and Garden Festival in Crystal Springs, MS, scheduled for October 12-13. A trip in cooperation with the Louisiana chapters of the Camellia Society of America is planned to Bracy's Nursery in Amite on Friday November 30. A Christmas potluck is tentatively planned for early to mid-December at Peggy and Doc Cox's home in Independence. [Photo 1]

## Northern Virginia Chapter News

*Barry Sperling, Corresponding Secretary*

As the chapter moves into a busy fall, we can look back at the summer cutting exchange with satisfaction. New president Lars Larson held an efficient business meeting, then guided the members through the process of distributing the plant exchange material as well as the hundreds of cuttings.

Unfortunately, the chapter lost long-time member and friend Norma Merritt at the age of 92. She lived a full life, which was chronicled in the *Washington Post*.

Coming up as this is being written: the 11th Annual Plant Auction and Sale in Springfield at the Kirkwood Presbyterian Church, where we are also lucky to have our meetings.

Following that will be a regular meeting on October 28, with ASA President Rick Bauer and Don Hyatt speaking about their travels to conventions and gardens in Europe last spring.

Carolyn and Paul Beck have been active on several fronts, working with Meadowlark Botanical Gardens in Vienna, VA, to host a section displaying the hybrids of our Joe Klimavicz, who is also a resident of Vienna. Planting is expected to be done in early October.

The Becks are also delivering a large number of Holly Springs and McDonald azaleas to the Jenkins Arboretum to fill out their gardens.

Rick Bauer has been involved with the Norfolk Botanical Gardens, providing them with Glenn Dale azaleas, grown from cuttings by Mike White of White's Nursery, for their collection.

We have an active calendar every year, so join us! The Northern Virginia Chapter welcomes new Virginia members: Chip Benjamin and Doug Pulak, Arlington; Mason McDaniel, Springfield; and Anne Marie and Dan McKinnon, Vienna.

Our website is: <https://www.nv-asa.org> and our Clipper newsletters can be found at: <https://www.nv-asa.org/clippers/>

## Texas Chapter

*Sherrie Randall—Secretary*

October 18th, the chapter will hold the fall business meeting at the Shangri La Botanical Gardens and Nature Center in Orange, Texas, followed by a tour of Shangri La by Rick Lewandowski, Director of the facility. The business meeting will include election of officers and discussion of plans for 2019. This meeting timing and location is particularly poignant, since Shangri La has had to be completely restored after the damage caused by Hurricane Harvey in 2016. They held their grand re-opening September 12, 2018.

Texas Chapter welcomes new members Lori Horne, Brookeland; Betty F. Roth and Gabby Woods, Call; Tom Alford, Emory; Donna Vandermolten, Grapeland; Denise Kelley and June Mayer, Jasper; Sue Singletary, Kirbyville; Michael Short, Sam Rayburn; and Anita Quinn, San Augustine.

## Vaseyi Chapter

*Suzanne Medd—Secretary*

Vaseyi Chapter had a meeting on February 25th, 2018. Chapter President J Jackson shared his secrets and his hard-earned knowledge with our members in his presentation, "Growing Native Azaleas from Seed and Growing Them Large Enough to Plant in the Ground!" Ideas for future meetings and new member drives were discussed.

Audrey Stelloh was presented with the Augie Kehr Memorial Award in recognition of her outstanding participation in the activities of the Vaseyi Chapter. [Photo 2.] The First Annual Azalea Festival to celebrate the native azaleas in Graham County will be held in Robbinsville, NC,

▼ Photo 2—Audrey Stelloh (l) receives the Augie Kehr Memorial Award from J Jackson (r).



Photo Photo Jean Pace

The Augie Kehr Memorial Award  
is presented to  
Audrey Stelloh

For your distinguished contribution to furthering the knowledge of,  
Propagation, care and general appreciation of Azaleas  
And  
In recognition of your outstanding participation in the activities of the  
Vaseyi Chapter  
Presented with deep gratitude by the Vaseyi Chapter of the ASA  
during this meeting of the Vaseyi Chapter  
in the County of Henderson the State of North Carolina,  
United States of America on the 25th day of February 2018

June 14th to 15th. Several Vaseyi Chapter members hope to attend.

Vaseyi Chapter members also extended invitations to visit their gardens at peak azalea bloom times: Audrey Stelloh on April 20-22, and Andy and You-Ying Whipple on May 11. The blooms of the Vaseyi collection of J and Lindy Jackson were outstanding this year, and members were invited to visit on May 17.

Vaseyi Chapter welcomes new North Carolina members Leshia and Russell Webb, Candler; Daniel and Kaye Allison and Rick and Sara Davis, Robbinsville; and Francine Ritch, Sanford.

## New At-large Members

The ASA welcomes: Connie Landers, Brinnon, WA; David Ledlie, Buckfield, ME; Don Farris, Eclectic, AL; Kelly Kline, Malibu, CA; and Brent Wilson, McDonough, GA.

# Renewal Time is Approaching

By Paul Beck, Treasurer

That time of year, when your annual dues need to be paid, is fast approaching. Dues are still \$30 per year. Paper mailing of reminders will go out in mid-October, and an email reminder shortly thereafter. If you use email, and were not notified last year about your renewal via email, please send me your email address at [treasurer@azaleas.org](mailto:treasurer@azaleas.org).



In an attempt to improve renewal percentages, this year the follow-up reminders will be handled by the local chapters instead of by me. Hopefully the more local approach will be more fruitful.

Renewal is best accomplished by using the **Join Us**, **Renew** or **Donate** link on the ASA website. If you choose not to renew electronically, you may use the renewal form on the wrapper of this issue and the winter issue of *The Azalean*. This application form is also available on the ASA website.

This year I am again encouraging the use of our **subscription service**, via the **PayPal™** credit card payment service. This will allow you to register your credit card with PayPal, and have your annual membership fees deducted automatically. Click on the “Yearly Automatic Subscription” accordion near the bottom of the **Join Us** page.

# Navigating the Searchable ASA Azalea Database

By Paul Beck—Treasurer and Assistant Webmaster

This is the second in a series of articles describing the interactive features of the new ASA website. This series was introduced in the 2017 winter issue of *The Azalean*, and there will be a short article in subsequent issues describing a single feature as outlined in the introduction. This article focuses on the **Searchable Azalea Database**. This database is accessed from the top-level menu item “Azalea Types.”

## Database Design Goals

The ASA azalea database is a key component of the new society website introduced in 2017. There were three primary design goals for this new implementation of public access to azalea records: (1) create a searchable repository of azalea characteristics; (2) integrate descriptions, characteristics, and photographs in one place; and (3) provide the ability for selected society members to enter and update azalea data so that data entry is not the responsibility of the webmaster.

This last goal permeates many of the new interactive features of the website; dispersed data management is a key aspect in the design of each component. In the 2018 spring issue of *The Azalean*, I discussed the membership database. The data update capability for membership records can be assigned to selected members, such as the membership chairperson, chapter officers, and at the lowest level, the individual member can update their own record.

For the azalea database, selected members who have volunteered to assist with improving and filling out information gaps can be assigned a “role” on the website, tied to their login email, that provides them with the ability to update selected cultivar data (in the case of **Legacy Project** leads), specific non-legacy groups, or all azalea data.

## Help Needed

As indicated at the top of the azalea database page, the total number of azaleas in the database is over 11,000, and much help is needed to fill out missing information gaps. Most of this data came from the old ASA website pages which were not easily searched, and which had no descriptions or photographs. Unfortunately, there are also a lot of duplicate entries in the database due to the way the data was entered/merged, or incorrect/different group designations for the same plant. These duplicates need to be sorted through and removed.

Although the pBase photo website contained many photographs, they were not linked to the cultivar listing on the ASA website. After the new website was launched, I attempted to locate the original photos for those published on pBase; however, I discovered that the originals were no longer available in one place. The resolution of the photos residing on pBase is not sufficient for use on the new website, so the original photos need to be located. ASA Member

Jim Trumbly from Roseville, CA has been kind enough to provide a very large number of Satsuki photographs for use on the website. I am working through these photos (at a snail's pace, unfortunately). Please contact me if you have good resolution photos with azalea name identifications that you are willing to share. All photos uploaded from this time forward will have a copyright statement crediting the photographer.

Approximately 2,000 cultivars were also merged from the Northern Virginia (NVA) chapter website, and the design of the new ASA website data was patterned after the NVA website. These cultivars, for the most part, included a description and several high-resolution photographs, as well as searchable criteria in some instances. The eventual goal is to provide a similar presentation for a large portion of the remaining cultivars. This is where [you can help!](#) Please contact me if you are willing to help with this huge task.

## Searching

When the azalea database is first accessed, a fairly lengthy list of search instructions is presented. Those instructions will not be repeated here. Briefly, you can search for cultivars on the following attributes:

- Name and/or Group;
- Type (Azaleodendron, Deciduous, Evergreen, and Unknown);
- Predominant Color(s); and
- Bloom period (e.g., early, midseason, late)

These attributes can be combined to further limit the search results.

## Browsing

The default method for viewing the azalea database is browsing by cultivar name. When the database is first accessed from the **Azalea Types**→**Azalea Database** menu, an A to Z list of links is presented above the search criteria:

[A](#) [B](#) [C](#) [D](#) [E](#) [F](#) [G](#) [H](#) [I](#) [J](#) [K](#) [L](#) [M](#) [N](#) [O](#) [P](#) [Q](#) [R](#) [S](#) [T](#) [U](#) [V](#) [W](#) [X](#) [Y](#) [Z](#)

If you click on one of these letters, you will be presented with all the cultivars starting with that letter, and a further refined three-letter set of links (first three letters of the cultivar) for that segment of the alphabet. This handy browsing feature was adopted from the old website.

[Gar](#)⇒[Gek](#) [Gek](#)⇒[Gen](#) [Gen](#)⇒[Get](#) [Get](#)⇒[Gir](#) [Gir](#)⇒[Gla](#)

Below the search criteria will be displayed the browse results for that segment of the alphabet:

 <a href="#">'Girard's Fuchsia'</a>	Girard	evg	Purple,Red	Midseason
 <a href="#">'Girard's Hot Shot'</a>	Girard	Galle85	evg	

If there is a small thumbnail photo at the start of the row, there are one or more photos associated with the cultivar. The photos can be viewed by clicking on the thumbnail or the cultivar name link. The full details on the cultivar will also be displayed, as shown below.



3-4' x 3-4', upright. Flowers deep, brilliant reddish-purple (RHS 71A) with a prominent, very dark blotch. Single with rounded, overlapping lobes and ruffled edges, 2 1/2-3" wide. Blooms early; early May in NV. Glossy dark green foliage turns a reddish tint in winter. Hardy to -15 F./Zone 5.

Cultivar:	Group:	Ref:	Type:	Color:	Blooms:
'Girard's Fuchsia'	Girard		Evergreen	Purple,Red	Midseason
Other Name(s):	Seed Parent:	Pollen Parent:	Height:	Hardy:	
			3-1/2ft	Hardy to -15 F.	

Above the description are thumbnails for all the photos currently available for this cultivar. If you click on one of these thumbnails, a pop-up carousel is shown, with the ability to scroll forward or backward through the images. If we have a sufficiently high-resolution image, a nearly full-screen image is displayed. These images are not the highest quality (they have been reduced to provide better download speed) but are very satisfactory for full-screen presentation and can be extracted to your computer from the website. Note that many photos are copyrighted by the photographer and may not be used without permission from the photographer.

## Data Export (Possible New Capability)

I am considering adding a data export feature, as is available on the member database. If there is sufficient interest, this feature can be implemented reasonably easily. In the present state of the database, an export will not be of great use where there is no description or where attributes for the cultivar have not been added to the data. Let me know if you think this feature would be worthwhile. Email me at [treasurer@azaleas.org](mailto:treasurer@azaleas.org)

## The Azalean Needs Short Articles!

Consider writing for the journal about topics that interest you or concern you about azalea care, culture, and enjoyment. In 2019 your editorial team would like to publish articles that would help



members care for pests, diseases, create new garden beds, or places to visit to see fabulous azalea gardens. It is especially helpful if these can be 300-400 words. Please send to [TheAzalean@gmail.com](mailto:TheAzalean@gmail.com).

# ASA Seed Exchange

## Contributing Seed

Seed contributions are accepted from ASA members and other sources until December 31. Put the seed from each plant into one paper envelope and describe by:

- contributor's name
- seed parent name
- pollen parent name
- plant type (evergreen, deciduous, azaleodendron)
- pollination type (cutting wood, open pollinated, hand pollinated)
- where collected (geographic feature or town)
- notes

Write this information on seed envelopes or download and print the seed data form (4KB) from the ASA website at: **Propagation>Seed Exchange**. Mail seed envelopes to:

Lindy Johnson  
843 Wallace Rd  
Trade, TN 37691

If you have digital pictures of the parents, please e-mail them to Dave Banks ([dfbanks@earthlink.net](mailto:dfbanks@earthlink.net)), with the name, date and location taken, for posting on the web linked to your seed.

When we receive the seed, each lot is cleaned and packaged into #1 coin envelopes, assigned identification numbers, and stored.

## Ordering Seed

The 2019 seed list will be posted online on or about January 1st, with an address to request a hard copy list of seed available.

Seed is shown on the web on a **seed list page**, where it is listed alphabetically by seed parent name with the information provided by the seed contributor, including links to any pictures of the parent plants.

Seed distribution schedule is on a first-come, first-served basis:

- January 1-April 1: to contributors and ASA members
- Starting April 1: to anyone
- Each seed packet (#1 coin envelope) contains approximately 50 seeds.
- Costs: \$2.00 per packet, plus \$3.00 for shipping and handling all the envelopes in one order.

Orders can be placed by e-mail to [appalnativeplants@gmail.com](mailto:appalnativeplants@gmail.com) or by a letter addressed to the address provided above. All seed not distributed before the annual convention will be offered for sale there. Payment can be by a check made out to "ASA" with "seed exchange" on the memo line, or by a credit card payment through PayPal using the form on the Seed Exchange 2018 page.

## What's in a Name?

By Barbara Stump—Nacogdoches, Texas

Way back in 1753 Swedish botanist and scholar Carolus Linnaeus simplified the naming of all types of plants by giving them two names in Latin: a genus and a species epithet. Before that, people would try to describe the plants they knew willy-nilly by as many descriptors as possible. For example, a violet might be called purple-flowered plant with heart-shaped leaves that dies in the winter. The problem, of course, is that not everyone describes plants the same way.

So Linnaeus' solution was elegantly simple: Group plants that all have the same characteristics in the same genus, and then divide them into species that indicate important characteristics to help distinguish one member of a genus from another. Thus, all azaleas now belong to the genus *Rhododendron*, but not all are evergreen, or have fragrance, or are a certain color. It is these differences that resulted in species names.

One difficulty arose for our Southern favorite azaleas, the "Formosa" azalea. The 1838 genus name was *Azalea* (feminine gender in Latin), which required a feminine descriptive species, such as *Formosa*. It was around this time that azaleas began to be imported into America and the *Azalea formosa* 'White' or 'Pink' or 'Rose' became very familiar on nursery lists and to home gardeners.

Meanwhile in 1834 Scottish botanist and scholar George Don had published his *A General System of Dichlamydeous Plants*, which widely influenced azalea nomenclature. This work placed many species of *Azalea* in genus *Rhododendron*. Accordingly, the specific epithets for those species had to agree with the Latin gender of *Rhododendron*. *Rhododendron* is now the genus name for both *rhododendrons* and azaleas.

*Rhododendrons* are typically larger plants, have larger trusses ("towers") of flowers, mainly waxy leaves, are always evergreen, and typically grow in colder climates where they can withstand below-zero temperatures. Southern nursery breeders are working with *Rhododendron hyperythrum*, which has heat-tolerance, to develop a series of *rhododendrons* for the South.

Azaleas have now been classified within the genus *Rhododendron* as having very different species characteristics—such as smaller shrubs, some that lose their leaves in the winter, some that have hairy leaves, some with fragrance, etc. An example would be our native *Rhododendron viscosum*, commonly named the Texas Azalea or the Texas Swamp Azalea, which is white-flowered. There are 19 different deciduous species native to America. All of the evergreen azaleas came from Southeast Asia and Japan, including our Southern favorite *Rhododendron formosum* 'Lavender Formosa'.

So, bottom line, our favorite *Rhododendron* "Formosa" azaleas are now more accurately named *R. formosum* 'Pink Formosum' in the botanical literature references.

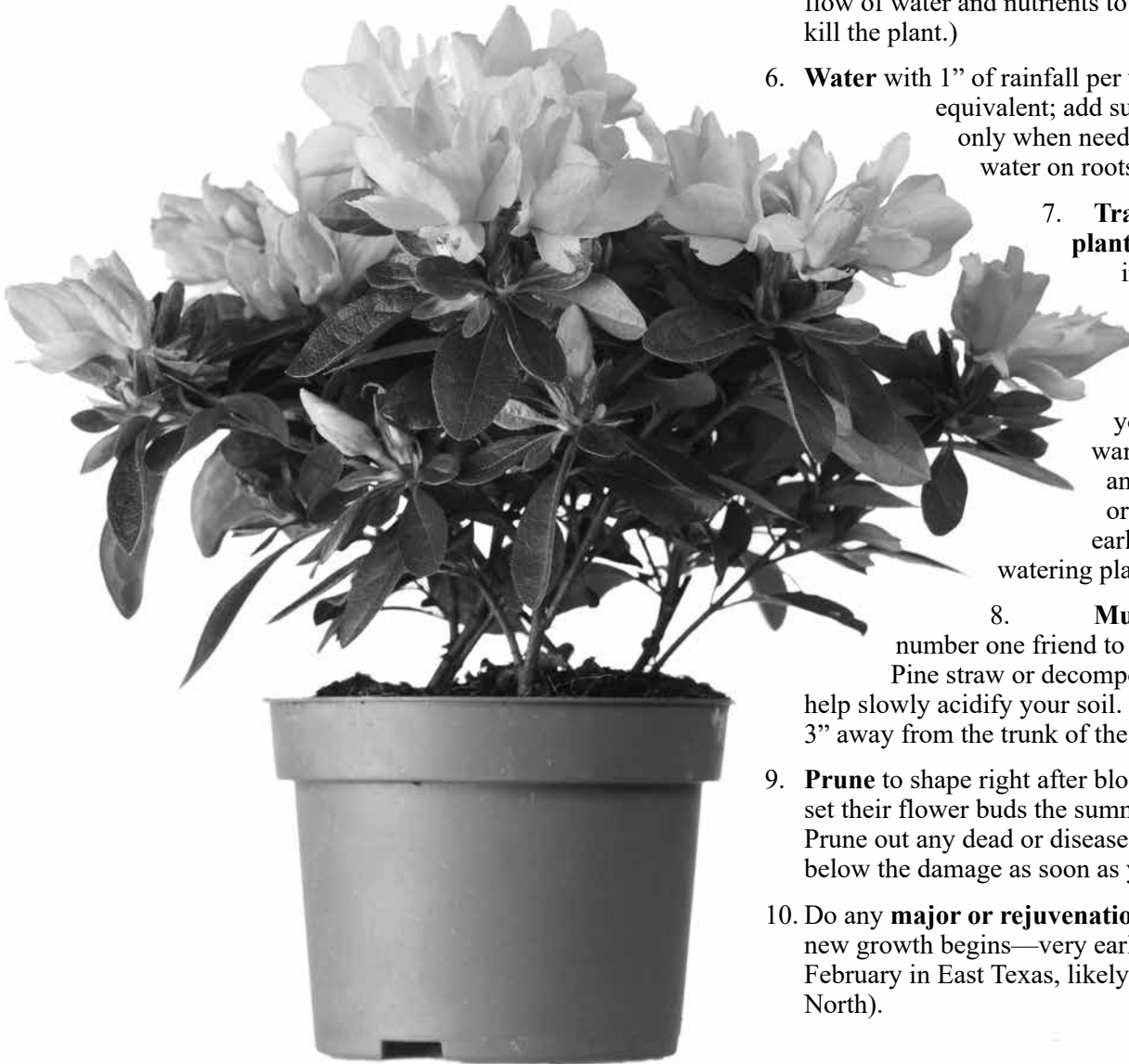
Some of this information appeared in the following: Stump, Barbara. *Azaleas of Nacogdoches*. Stephen F. Austin State University Press, Nacogdoches, TX. 2015. p. 39.

# Top 10 Tips for Azalea Growing

Editor's Note: Information from the ASA website and personal experience.

Fall and winter are times of re-examining our gardens and taking stock of what worked and what did not. For many in the Southern US we can plant new azaleas in the fall, which is the best time to allow roots to settle before serious summer heat. Our Texas Chapter hands out these Top 10 Tips to new members and those who buy azaleas at our plant sales, always recommending they consult the longer versions of these “tips” on the ASA website under **Azalea Basics>Azalea Care**. There you will find a very detailed discussion, with an excellent planting diagram, by Caroline Beck, NVA Chapter.

1. **Test soil for pH**; azaleas need slightly acid soil (pH 5.0 to 6.5). Bring soil sample to your county extension offices for testing if unsure.



2. **Plant varieties that are adapted to our climate** (USDA 8b in Nacogdoches) and adapted to your microclimate—even Southern Indicas don't like being planted by a concrete driveway or brick wall (even if you irrigate and there is some relief from west sun).
3. **Plant in loose, well-drained soil** (50% organic matter).
4. **Plant high**, not in a well—to avoid fungus problems. While they look like little trees, they cannot stand in a “bowl” of water.
5. **Fertilize** shortly after bloom (and after last frost date); add a second, lighter application about September, or at least 6 weeks before first frost date. Sprinkle fertilizer in a ring around the plant, at the “drip line”, never at the base of the trunk. (If you do this, it is corrosive, and can interrupt the flow of water and nutrients to the crown, and can kill the plant.)
6. **Water** with 1” of rainfall per week or its equivalent; add supplemental watering only when needed. Avoid standing water on roots.
7. **Transplant when plants are least stressed**, in the coolest seasons possible—fall is best, early spring (before April) second best. If you must transplant in warm weather, do it on an overcast day, a day or so after rain, and early or late in the day, watering plants thoroughly.
8. **Mulch** is your number one friend to keep soil moist. Pine straw or decomposed pine bark help slowly acidify your soil. Keep mulch 3” away from the trunk of the plants.
9. **Prune** to shape right after blooming, since azaleas set their flower buds the summer after flowering. Prune out any dead or diseased wood to an area below the damage as soon as you spot it.
10. Do any **major or rejuvenation pruning** before new growth begins—very early spring (late February in East Texas, likely March-April up North).

# Distinguished Service Awards



Photo Joe Nicholson

## AZALEA SOCIETY OF AMERICA

The Azalea Society of America takes great honor in presenting

### THE DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD

to

George McLellan

in recognition of his many contributions in promoting the propagation and preservation of native azaleas. George was an integral member of the team organized by the American Rhododendron Society to preserve a large stand of unique native azaleas on Hooper Bald in the Nantahala National Forest, North Carolina. The countless hours he has spent in the clearing of competing vegetation and planting of native species has resulted in the restoration of the native azalea population on Hooper Bald. This has provided a readily accessible area for the general public to enjoy the beauty of native azaleas.

Richard F. Bauer, President  
Robert E. Lee, Awards Chair



Photo Joe Nicholson

## AZALEA SOCIETY OF AMERICA

The Azalea Society of America takes great honor in presenting

### THE DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD

to

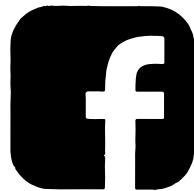
J Jackson and Lindy Johnson

in recognition of your many contributions to the Azalea Society of America. Your love for azaleas and sharing of your knowledge has truly advanced our society and has enhanced the appreciation of azaleas for many people. For your service to the national society board, to the Vaseyi Chapter, and for your outstanding work in the preservation of azalea cultivars and species, you have truly been assets to our society.

Richard F. Bauer, President  
Robert E. Lee, Awards Chair



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US ON**



**Azalea Society  
of America**

## For the Record, Summer 2018 Issue

In the caption about the ASA member-lecturers for Azaleas 101, (page 34, photo 31, line 3), Ronnie (not Larry) Palmer was the first person on the left in the front row.

On page 47, we showed a special ASA award to Janet Carson. The title of the actual award was “The Special Friend of Azaleas Recognition.”

We regret both errors.



# 2019 Convention Preview

## History, Azaleas, and Sweet Tea

By Tom Johnson—Charleston, South Carolina

The Rev. John Drayton Azalea Chapter of the Azalea Society of America and Magnolia Plantation and Gardens<sup>1</sup> will host the society's 2019 convention Thursday to Saturday, March 14-16, 2019, in Summerville, South Carolina. [Photo 1] The registration form is printed on the inside cover of this issue of this issue of *The Azalean* and is available at the ASA website, [www.azaleas.org](http://www.azaleas.org).

Themed "History, Azaleas, and Sweet Tea," the conference is appropriately being held in Summerville, which is certified as an ASA Azalea City and known as the home of "sweet tea."

Convention speakers will include Dr. John Nelson, chief curator at the A.C. Moore Herbarium, Department of Biological Sciences at the University of South Carolina; Sidney Frazier, Middleton Place's vice-president of horticulture; native azalea expert Ernest Koone; and historic interpreters Dontavius Williams and Kirk Brown.

Planners selected Summerville as the convention site because of the town's unique history. The first settlement in Summerville began following the Revolutionary War. In 1785, it was referred to as the Pineland Village. Plantation owners flocked to Summerville to escape insects and swamp fever. By 1847, Summerville was incorporated. In that year, the town passed a law against cutting down large trees.

▼ Photo 1—Magnolia Plantation Home surrounded by azaleas.



Photo Magnolia Plantation

Today, the motto on the town's official seal reads: "Sacra Pinus Esto (The Pine is Sacred)."

In this historic town, the Wyndham Garden Hotel and the Hampton Inn, located across the street from one another, have been selected as sites for this year's convention. Room rates, not including taxes, are \$129 at the Wyndham and \$139 at the Hampton. Rooms are limited so book early.<sup>2,3</sup>

### Thursday, March 14 Welcome and Plant Sale

Check-in on Thursday will be in the Wyndham Hotel's lobby where you will receive a convention bag filled with goodies, agendas, and badges. Since Wyndham's banquet hall can seat 150 people, most activities will be held there. The azalea and plant sale will be held across the street at the Hampton.

The fun starts Thursday night at the welcome reception where you can visit with old friends, make new ones, and receive information on the upcoming tours and educational programs. The plant sale will be open for a limited time (5 p.m.- 9 p.m.), so arrive early to get those rare azaleas and other plants before they go home with someone else.

### Friday, March 15 Tours and Speakers

Friday's breakfast, catered by Beyond Expectations, will include Belgian waffles with assorted toppings, pecan-smoked bacon, fresh seasonal fruit, stone-ground cheddar-cheese grits, biscuits, coffee, and juices. Buses will load at 8:00 a.m., so breakfast early.

Buses load at 8:00 a.m. Friday for the tours. The adventure starts at Middleton Place, home of America's oldest formal gardens. [Photo 2] After touring Middleton, lunch will be served there. Sidney Frazier, Middleton's vice-president of

▼ Photo 2—Formal Garden Camellia Walk at Middleton Place.



Photo William C. Miller III

horticulture, will talk about the gardens.

Mepkin Abbey, a former plantation with its beautiful gardens, is the next stop. Mepkin Abbey is now an active Roman Catholic monastery. The order was established in 1949. The monks live by the work of their hands, supporting the poor and devoting their lives to unceasing prayer, spiritual study, work, and hospitality. The grounds include the Nancy Bryan Luce Gardens, as well as a gift shop with dried mushrooms and garden compost from the Abbey's farm; and candies, preserves, and creamed honey from other Trappist abbeys.<sup>4</sup>



Photo Magnolia Plantation

▲ Photo 3—Kirk Brown will portray Frederick Law Olmstead.

Following the abbey, we will return to the hotels for dinner on your own. Don't stray too far or you will miss learning little known facts about Charleston's intriguing history. The evening will start with Kirk Brown's portrayal of Fredrick Law Olmstead, the father of American landscape architecture. In 1853, Olmstead traveled through the south and Charleston and then he wrote about rice production. In 1906, the Olmstead Brothers' firm designed Charleston's Hampton Park. [Photo 3]

The history lesson will continue with the story of a slave boy named Adam. Dontavius Williams will present "The Chronicles of Adam" in a riveting interpretation. Although based on a real person, this story is comprised of various accounts, historical facts, and life lessons for people of any age. [Photo 4]

▼ Photo 4—Magnolia Plantation interpreter Dontavius Williams will present "The Chronicles of Adam."



Photo Magnolia Plantation

## Saturday, March 16 Tours, Banquet, Annual Meeting

Rise early on Saturday for another Beyond Expectations breakfast of farmhouse frittatta (similar to an omelette or quiche) with bacon and sausages, fresh seasonal fruit, stone-ground cheddar-cheese grits, biscuits, coffee and juices.

Buses load at 8:00 a.m. Saturday for the Charleston Tea Plantation on Wadmalaw Island. William Barclay Hall started the tea plantation with *Camellia sinensis* plants originally grown by Dr. Charles Shepard at his Pinehurst Tea Plantation in Summerville. After his death in 1915 that plantation closed, and Dr. Shepard's plants grew wild for 40 years. In 1963 a 127-acre potato farm on Wadmalaw Island, used as an experimental farm, included transplants of Shepard's plants from Pinehurst. In 1987, Hall, a third-generation tea taster with formal training during a four-year tea apprenticeship in London, England, purchased the land and converted the research farm to a commercial tea producing operation. Tea plantation guides will discuss how plants are grown and harvested.

Lunch will be served at Magnolia Plantation, America's oldest romantic-style garden. During lunch, Ernest Koone will discuss the history of native azaleas. [Photo 5] After lunch roam Magnolia's gardens on your own or join an organized tour led by a member of Magnolia's garden staff. [Photo 6] Return to the hotel for the farewell banquet. The menu includes Caesar salad, Charleston chicken, oven-roasted red bliss potatoes, haricot verts (green beans) or Southern-style green beans, rolls and butter.

▼ Photo 5—Ernest Koone, Georgia native azalea expert.

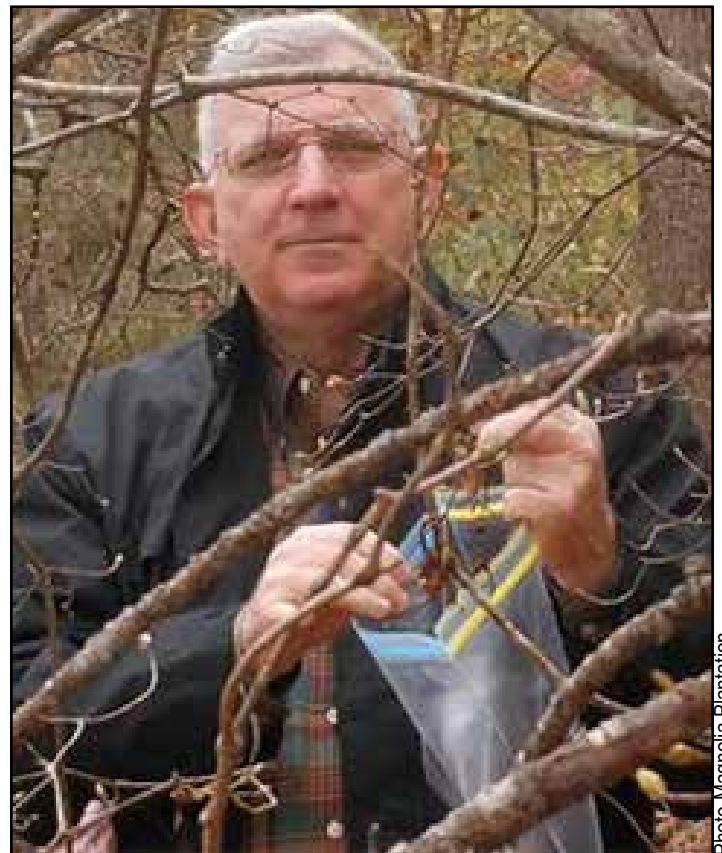


Photo Magnolia Plantation



Photo William C. Miller III

▲ Photo 6—Wealth of azaleas at Magnolia Plantation, including many Southern Indians, deciduous azaleas, and newer varieties as well.

Dr. John Nelson, chief curator at the A.C. Moore Herbarium, Department of Biological Sciences at the University of South Carolina, will be the banquet speaker. The herbarium in Columbia, SC, contains more than 130,000 dried plant specimens, primarily from the southeastern United States. Established more than 100 years ago, the herbarium contains a diverse collection of vascular and nonvascular plants.

The 2019 Annual ASA Meeting will follow the banquet.

## Notes:

1. Magnolia Plantation and Gardens, ([www.Magnoliaplantation.com](http://www.Magnoliaplantation.com))
2. Wyndham Garden Hotel, (<https://bit.ly/2uSWi2>), 120 Holiday Drive, Summerville, SC 29483—1-843-875-3300.
3. Hampton Inn, (<https://bit.ly/2LVw4le>), 121 Holiday Drive, Summerville, SC 29483—1-843-871-8300.
4. <http://Mepkinabbey.org>

Tom Johnson is a lifelong horticulturist with impressive garden design project skills as well:

- Growing up on a middle-Georgia truck farm, in high school he oversaw the redesign of downtown Perry, Georgia, winning a prestigious national award.

## 2019 ASA National Convention Itinerary Summerville South Carolina March 14-16, 2019

### Thursday, March 14th

9 AM-7 PM	Registration opens
5 PM-9 PM	Plant sales
TBD	ASA Board Meeting
TBD	Dinner on your own
7 PM-9 PM	Welcome Reception **

### Friday, March 15th

6:30-7:45 AM	Breakfast **
8:30 AM	Buses leave for Middleton Place Tour and Lunch
1:00 PM	Buses leave for Mepkin Abby
3:30 PM	Depart for Hotel
TBD	Dinner on your own
7:30 PM	Dontavious Williams "A Slave Boy Named Adam" – Wyndham Hotel
8:30 PM	Kirk Brown "Olmstead" – Wyndham Hotel
TBD	Plant Sales - after dinner for 1-1/2 hours.

### Saturday, March 16th

6:30-7:45 AM	Breakfast**
8:30 AM	Buses leave for Magnolia Plantation
12:00 PM	Lunch **—Ernest Koone III speaks during lunch
TBD	Depart Magnolia to Charleston Tea Plantation
TBD	Depart for hotels
TBD	Banquet - Wyndham Hotel
Keynote Speaker:	John Nelson, Curator of the Herbarium within the Department of Biological Sciences at the University of South Carolina
TBD	Plant Sales - after dinner for 1-1/2 hours

### Sunday, March 17th

TBD	Plant Sales – 3 hrs. – Sunday morning.
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\*\*Included in Registration Fee  
TBD = To be determined

- Enlisted by President Jimmy Carter in 1985-1995 to oversee the building of the gardens at the Carter Presidential Library in Atlanta and selected for the design team of the library's Evan Allen III Pavilion and the Cecil B. Day Chapel. While at the Carter Center Gardens, Tom apprenticed for five years under world-renowned Japanese architect Kinsako Nakane.
- Service as the national horticulturist with the American Camellia Society national headquarters at the Masee Lane Gardens.

While at Masee Lane, John Drayton Hastie Jr., one of the owners of Magnolia Plantation and Gardens in Charleston, heard Tom speak of his affection for romantic-style gardens. Hastie lured Tom to Magnolia to restore the gardens at America's oldest romantic-style garden. The project launched Tom on a worldwide search for azalea and camellia varieties that predate the 1900s. It also spurred him to share his gardening expertise with colleagues in Belgium, France, Barbados, and Cuba.

Tom describes Magnolia as a grand old lady. "My job is to shine her shoes, dress her in some new robes, and get her ready for the thousands of suitors that come calling each year."

# Jasper Texas—First New ASA Azalea City in 2018

By Brent Meaux and Robert Thau—Jasper, Texas

Jasper, Texas, is a small town in the piney woods of east Texas known as the “Jewel of the Forest.” Rolling hills, native woodland trails, Lake Sam Rayburn, Toledo Bend Lake, Martin Dies, Jr. State Park, and Sandy Creek all bring a sense of the way life used to be in our community.

For many years, downtown Jasper has hosted the annual Azalea Festival on the courthouse square. March 17, 2018 was our 30th anniversary hosting the event, which includes public azalea trails throughout the city’s residential area. The trails attract visitors from surrounding areas to view massive shows of azaleas in yard after yard, primarily different varieties of “Formosa” (‘Formosum’) azaleas.\*

Jasper is already the Butterfly Capital of Texas centered on the Monarch migration. This focus includes our butterfly watch stations and butterfly house within the Jasper Arboretum along the Sandy Creek Park and Nature Trail.

In the past year we’ve led a grassroots movement to coordinate the festival, parks, and community in an awareness campaign to make Jasper, Texas, an ASA Azalea City. This movement started about a year ago as we began working on the project to obtain material needed to qualify for this national ASA recognition. We gathered all the information and Robert presented it to Buddy Lee, chairman of the Azalea City Program. Within a month, Buddy Lee called with approval for Jasper to be a nationally recognized ASA Azalea City.

Mayor Gary Gatlin, the Chamber of Commerce, and City Manager Denise Kelley were all notified and continue to support the newly recognized designation and promoted this year’s 30th Azalea Festival as the platform for recognizing Jasper, Texas, as an official Azalea City. [Photo 1.]

The main goal and primary focus for the Azalea City designation is to expose the public to large numbers of azaleas that the public may not know or recognize. In addition to

▼ Photo 1—Buddy Lee (l), Azalea City Program Chairman, presents Mayor Gary Gatlin with Jasper’s Azalea City award, while Texas Chapter President Robert Thau (r) looks on.



Photo Mary Beth Hagood

adding members in Jasper within the ASA’s Texas Chapter, the Azalea City designation will attract new members from our region that will volunteer and collaborate with our Jasper Master Gardeners and Jasper Master Naturalists in beautification projects downtown and community-wide for generations to enjoy. [Photo 2.]

The City of Jasper has a very bright azalea future consisting of “reds, whites, pinks, purples,” and no telling what other colors await the annual pilgrimage to Texas’s newest Azalea City.

Brent Meaux is a Jasper Master Gardener and a State Farm agent. He is Jasper’s Downtown Revitalization Project Manager, and past chair of the Jasper Master Gardeners and Jasper Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce.

Robert Thau is Texas Chapter President and ASA Membership Chairman. He is an expert propagator of azaleas, will travel many miles to collect more, and is a strong supporter of the ASA Legacy Project. Robert is always eager to teach groups of plant lovers about azaleas and hold workshops on azaleas. His garden is open to the public, garden clubs, and Master Gardeners during the blooming season to introduce them to the hundreds of cultivars he has growing.

**\*Editor’s and Reviewer’s Note:** While many people refer to ‘Formosum’ azaleas as “Formosa azaleas”, this is not correct terminology according to the official naming entity for azaleas—the *International Rhododendron Register and Checklist (IRRC)*. For more clarification on this, please refer to the article by William C. Miller III: “Is it ‘Formosa’ or is it ‘Formosum’?—the System, the Codes, a Resource, and the Historical Background.” *The Azalean*. Winter 2016. 38(4): 76-81.

▼ Photo 2—Robert Thau (l) informed azalea shoppers about how to care for newly purchased azaleas at the Texas Chapter booth.



Photo Photo Buddy Lee

# Robbinsville, North Carolina, Named Azalea City

By Charlie Andrews—Cumming, Georgia

**R**obbinsville, North Carolina, is the newest ASA Azalea City, recognized for efforts promoting native azaleas.

The Graham County Native Azalea Festival was held in Robbinsville, North Carolina, June 15-16, 2018. The Native Azalea Festival in Robbinsville should be the first of many. The festival is based upon our native azaleas. Graham County and its county seat, Robbinsville, are surrounded by locations for observing these plants. Nearby are not only Hooper Bald but also the Blue Ridge Parkway, Wayah and Wine Spring Balds, Gregory Bald, Andrews Bald, and the Roan Highlands. Robbinsville is promoting native azaleas, encouraging people to see them in their native habitats, as well as encouraging government entities, businesses, and

residences to use native azaleas in their landscaping. For their efforts, President Rick Bauer on behalf of the Azalea Society of America recognized and certified Robbinsville with the prestigious designation of Azalea City on June 15, 2018. Mayor Steve Hooper and County Board Members Connie Orr and Dale Wiggins received the award. [Photo 1]

Hooper Bald, high on top of the Cherohala Skyway, was the center of attraction on Friday, June 15, and both the weather and the flame azalea performed to perfection. Early morning clouds and fog gave way to bright blue skies. The magnificent flame azalea (*Rhododendron calendulaceum*) was at peak bloom. Hooper Bald is special because the azaleas here have very large flowers and come in a wide variety of colors. Volunteers improved the quarter-mile path to the bald and made it easy to wander through paths to see the many plants. Guides led groups of visitors around the bald to see the special plants. First-time visitors left astonished at the raw beauty.

Organizers held a reception Friday evening at the Stecoah Valley Cultural Arts Center, a former school built out of native rock in 1926. After hors d'oeuvres so plentiful that the delicious morsels served as dinner and dessert, provided by

◀ Photo 1—President Rick Bauer (r ) presents the Azalea City Award to (l to r) Mayor Steve Hooper of Robbinsville and County Commissioners Connie Orr and Dale Wiggins.

▼ Photo 2—Congratulations, all ASA award winners: (l to r): Buddy Lee, awards chair, Steve Hooper, Connie Orr, Dale Wiggins, Lindy Johnson, J Jackson, George McLellan, Jim Brant, President Rick Bauer



Photo Joe Nicholson



Photo Joe Nicholson



Photo Joe Nicholson

▲ Photo 3—Revonda Williams, of Graham County Travel and Tourism, and her family have supported bald restoration for generations.



Photo Joe Nicholson

▲ Photo 4—Don Hyatt and George McLellan gave highlights of the local native azalea restoration effort with slides and videos.

▼ Photo 5—At the festival downtown the next day, ASA leadership, President Rick Bauer (l) and Vice President Charlie Andrews (r), helped by Jim Brant (m), explained the benefits of membership to visitor Hubert Barb (of the Middle Atlantic Chapter of the ARS).



Photo Joe Nicholson

history, plants, foods, children’s activities, and music. Azaleas were in high demand and sold out early. Flavored shaved ice was also a best seller as the temperature soared into the 90’s.

ASA members provided azaleas, information, and recruited new members at a festival booth. [Photo 5]. Supporting were Rick and Susan Bauer, J Jackson and Lindy Johnson, Jim and Pam Brant, Don Hyatt, George McLellan, Jan and Joe Nicholson, Buddy and Dixie Lee, Joe Miller and friend Halit Kardak, and Charlie Andrews. Thanks also go to Daniel Allison from the Graham County Travel and Tourism Office for his work in coordinating and supporting the ASA participation in the festival.

## References

- 1 Brown, John. “Releasing the Balds.” *The Azalean*. Summer 2009: 31(2): 43-44.

Charlie Andrews is ASA Vice President.

community food establishments and local cooks, all moved to the auditorium for presentations. ASA President Rick Bauer presented three ASA Distinguished Service Awards. The first was to Jim Brant, recognizing his efforts over a 10-year period to restore Hooper Bald. Jim also opened his garden for the 2016 Williamsburg convention. George McLellan also received an award primarily for his work on Hooper Bald. He was also a key member of the 2016 convention planning committee. Finally, former ASA President J Jackson and his wife Lindy Johnson, chair of the seed exchange and a former director, received an award for their service to the society and the board and for contributing hundreds of plants for the restoration of Hooper Bald. [Photo 2.] All of the work on Hooper Bald was the impetus for Graham County holding their first Native Azalea Festival. Also key to this effort was the work done by Revonda Williams from the Graham County Travel and Tourism Board, who has supported and helped coordinate the local native azalea effort from the initiation of the Hooper Bald restoration effort 10 years ago to the present. Revonda has a personal interest in Hooper Bald since it was once owned by her ancestors. [Photo 3.]

The reception concluded with a slide presentation, “Graham County Azalea Festival” by Don Hyatt. This presentation, told in Don’s typical clear but humorous style, was prepared by Don and George McLellan. [Photo 4.] It told the story of the restoration efforts, initiated by Jim Brant and supported by Duke Rankin of the National Park Service and many volunteers, to save and protect Hooper Bald’s and Gregory Bald’s azaleas.<sup>1</sup>

Robbinsville held festival activities on Saturday, June 16, around the courthouse square. Many vendors and organizations participated, offering crafts, antiques, local

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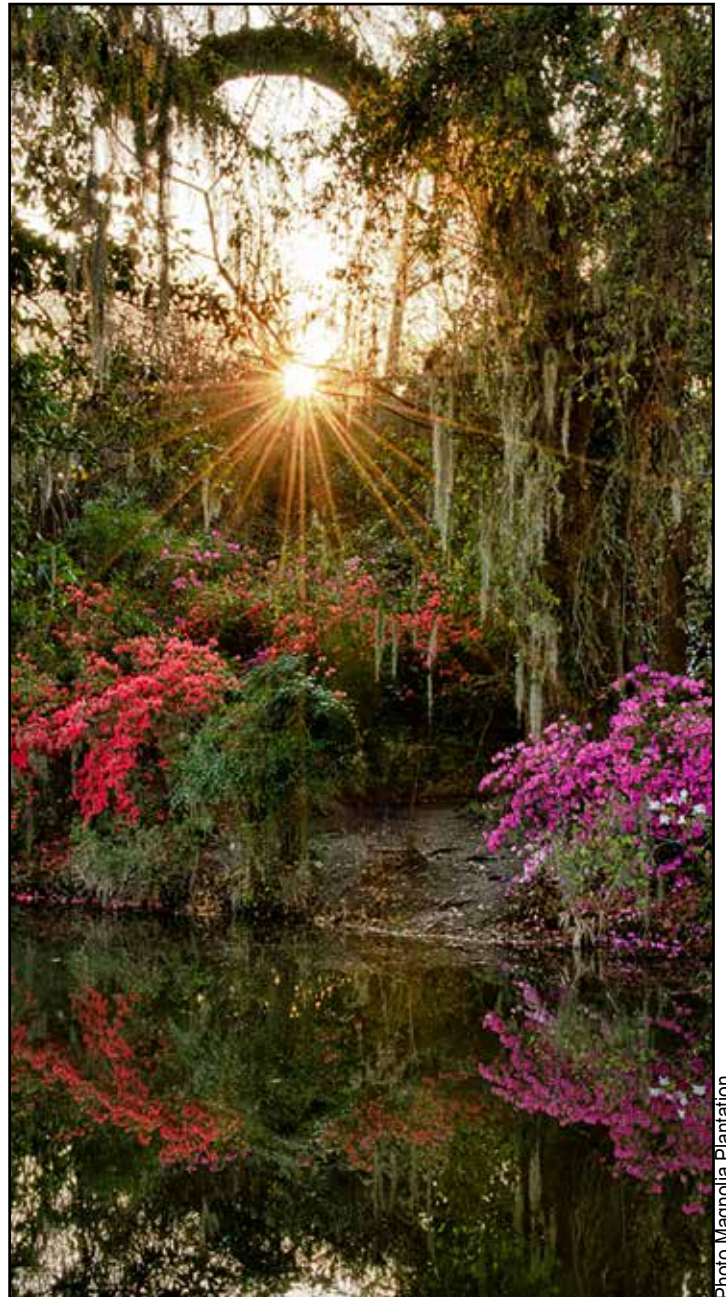


Photo Magnolia Plantation

▲ Come visit Summerville, South Carolina for the 2019 Convention and see nearby Magnolia Plantation and Gardens. Quite a sight at sunrise, as this photo shows.



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