

Chapter News and New Members

Alabamense Chapter

The chapter welcomes five new members: Dave and Jennifer Tompkins, Zeb and Aubrey O'Bryant, Auburn; and Vanessa Koelling, Montgomery, AL

Arkansas Chapter

Ronnie Palmer—President

[The following is taken from Ronnie's email that he sent to chapter members April 9, 2019.]

The weather is finally warming up enough to get the spring bloom well underway. Here at Azalea Hill the dogwoods are in peak bloom as well as many early blooming azaleas. The chapter is planning to visit the garden of Randall and Kay Lewis in Watson Chapel as well as Azalea Hill. Randall has an outstanding garden as you can see by the attached photos. He is expected his peak bloom to be April 18 or 19.

Glenn Dale Azaleas: We will be discussing these USDA azaleas from the 1950s as we go along. Some of the ones that are still sold are: 'Fashion', 'Glacier', 'Festive', 'Ben Morrison'. Here is a link to the legacy page on the Azalea Society website: www.azaleas.org/legacy-project/ Please read some of the articles about the Glenn dales. These are the most studied evergreen azaleas in North America.

Randall and Kay Lewis: Randall is an avid azalea grower. He has planted hundreds of azaleas over the past 30-40 years. His favorite plant is 'Louise J. Bobbink.' I think it will one of your favorites also after you see it. [Photo 1]

Azalea Hill Gardens & Nursery: Not necessarily a garden. Because we are collectors, there are almost no mass plantings. Many plants are over 45 years old. On the sandy knolls, there are a great many rhododendrons. Several are going to be in full bloom next week. This is a nursery, so there will be plants to buy, but the main point is to see the large variety of azaleas. We are open weekdays (10AM until 6 PM) and Sundays 1 till 4. [Photo 2]

Larry Coleman, Batesville: Larry called today. He is expecting to be in peak bloom next week also. We are

▼ Photo 1—Closeup of 'Louise J. Bobbink', a Rutherford Hybrid in Randall and Kay Lewis' Garden.



Photo Ronnie Palmer

planning to visit his fabulous garden the week of April 22-26. Specific day not yet determined.

Huang Azaleas: We discussed these azaleas at our February meeting. I need your help with the colors. Accurate color specification is important for official cultivar registration. We plan to get English names on a few this year. The early series will be in full bloom this week.

The chapter welcomes new members Anne Darnaby and Mary Wildgen, Little Rock.

Ben Morrison Chapter

Diane Reinke—Secretary

The memorial for former active member Gray Carter has been ordered. It is a teak bench with a plaque honoring him and his long-time dedication to the chapter. The Potomac Valley Chapter of the American Rhododendron Society is sharing in the expense. Installation at London Town Gardens is expected in May or June with a dedication ceremony to follow.

Upcoming events include a garden tour and new member recruitment June 29 at Gerald and Faith Bange's home and our annual summer picnic early in July.

A three-year effort to increase membership is in process with the help of White's Nursery in Germantown, Maryland.

Central Carolinas Chapter

Kevin McCorkle—President

In mid-April we were treated to a guided tour of the gardens of Historic Rosedale Plantation in Charlotte, North Carolina, by member Larry Mellichamp. Larry has worked with Rosedale for many years in selecting and planting a collection of unique plants, including many native companion plants in a very naturalistic setting. The timing of our field trip was based around viewing Rosedale's mature specimen of the uncommon Pringle Dogwood (*Cornus florida* subsp. *urbiniana*) in peak bloom. The tree did not disappoint, with

▼ Photo 2—Sunny view of Azalea Hill Gardens and Nursery, unlike last year's convention visit.



Photo Ronnie Palmer

hundreds of beautiful “Chinese lantern” shaped flowers, with bracts fused at the tips. An unexpected bonus of the garden tour was discovering a Robin’s nest with eggs almost exactly at eye level, nestled between branches of a beautiful specimen of Momi Fir (*Abies firma*).

Immediately after the Rosedale tour, we traveled to the home of Larry Mellichamp to enjoy an in-depth tour of the Mellichamp Garden. Larry’s is the quintessential collector’s garden, with plantings made over a period of over 40 years. We were amazed by the variety of plant species within such a compact space and admired how the plantings worked with the topography, sun, and shade to make the naturalistic space feel much larger than it is. The mature deciduous azaleas were at peak bloom and a large nearly scarlet *Rhododendron flammeum* along the path was a traffic stopper. Some memorable highlights were a pure yellow flowered form of *Rhododendron atlanticum*, a large solitary clump of lady fern surrounded by native Allegheny spurge (*Pachysandra procumbens*), a mature specimen of the evergreen azalea ‘Easter Parade’ in full bloom, and Larry’s extensive collection of Trillium species.

Our chapter is currently working on planning and logistics for the 2021 ASA Convention, and several members are actively working on propagation and plant acquisition for what we feel will be an exciting and memorable convention plant sale. We are very excited to have planned for access to a very special local horticultural gem as one of our convention venues. More on that in future news!

The chapter welcomes Peggy Myers, Fort Mill, SC.

Louisiana Chapter

Allen Owings and Louis Wolff

Our Spring meeting was held at the Hammond Research Station on March 31st. We had a large turnout with about 26 members. We had pastalaya, corn, white beans and salad (along with plenty of desserts). We were indoors due to the unexpected cold fronts. Items discussed included:

A report from the national convention by Martina Ellis, Jim Campbell and Peggy Cox.

Yan Chen, professor of horticulture at the Hammond Research Station, welcomed everyone to attend the annual Margie Jenkins Azalea Garden lecture series in April. Speakers will be native plant experts Bill Fontenot and Jim Foret. Jeb Fields from the Hammond Station will update everyone on Louisiana Super Plants.

We have 4 members in the Louisiana Azalea Society from Lafayette. They are very active in reviving the azalea trail in Lafayette. They offered to also host a national ASA convention in Lafayette sometime in the future. We have hosted two recently so that may be in the far future. Allen Owings said that we may have an azalea education program in Lafayette in November.

On October 12-16, the International Plant Propagator’s Society-Southern Region meeting will be in Baton Rouge. Allen Owings requested that we help provide plants for the silent auction.

The chapter contributed \$500 towards maintaining of the Margie Jenkins Azalea Garden at the Hammond Research Station this year. In addition, we approved \$1000 for a table sponsorship at the Louisiana Nursery and Landscape

Foundation for Scholarship and Research event in New Orleans on June 21st.

Our chapter is looking for healthy stock plants of Carla Azaleas for propagation. Some are rare. This is becoming an ASA Legacy Project, with Dr. Jeff Kuehny at Burden Center in Baton Rouge and Ken Owens at the Rural Life Museum Windrush Gardens coordinating.

There was an article in *225 Magazine* in Baton Rouge on Dr. Yan Chen’s research on growing tea plants in Louisiana.

We were glad Roy and Dale Constantin attended. We finally presented their Distinguished Service Award Plaque from the Azalea Society of America.

We ended the meeting by mentioning a late spring meeting and crawfish boil to be held at Jim Campbell’s place in Covington on May 5. [Photo 3]

The chapter welcomes Greg Cooper, Hammond, LA.

Northern VA Chapter

Barry Sperling—Secretary

Charlie Andrews started off the chapter’s year on March 31 with a talk on native azaleas, discussing his years of discovery searching for the plants, and discussing their natural hybridizing, which made the categorizing of the separate species much more difficult than most people believed.

The next day, many chapter volunteers went to Meadowlark Gardens in Vienna, VA, to plant a large selection of the hybrids of Joe Klimavicz, also of Vienna, as part of the Legacy Program. Negotiations with Meadowlark to feature this garden had been ongoing for a couple of years and it was great to see the plants in the ground at the selected site. As always, volunteers make the club work, and we’d like to thank them for helping with this planting of over 100 specimens:

Rick and Susan Bauer, Carolyn and Paul Beck, Joe Gutierrez, Don Hyatt, Anne Marie and Marianna McKinnon, Richard Mohr, Dave Nanney, Joanne and Dan Neckel, Fred Newlan, and Mike White. [Photo 4]

We’re looking forward to our popular cutting exchange on July 14 and the auction/sale of a large variety of plants

- ▼ Photo 3—Buddy Lee distributed complimentary plants from the back of his new truck at the LA Chapter meeting in Hammond, LA, in March.



on September 28, both of which draw many non-members. We'll have a speaker at our fall meeting on October 27. All three of the above events will be held at the Kirkwood Presbyterian Church in West Springfield, VA, so join us!

The chapter welcomes new members Joseph Nemmer, Mercer, PA; Judy Shapleigh, Falls Church, VA; and Kathy Higgins, Alexandria, VA.

Reverend John Drayton Chapter

The chapter welcomes Kathleen Bowers, Andrew and Phyllis Kreek, Denis and Susan Halloran, Jim Tyler, and Diane Urig, of Summerville, SC, and Jim and Linda Hassell Tyler, of Jacksonville, FL.

Texas Chapter

Caryl Hall—Secretary

On March 30th, the Texas Chapter sponsored a booth at the Nacogdoches Farmer's Market Spring Fling. There were several varieties of both deciduous and evergreen azaleas available for sale, the majority of which were rooted by chapter members. Visitors to the booth were given planting tips for azaleas and ASA information. Over 80% of the plants were sold and four new memberships were obtained. Our appreciation goes to Sherrie Randall who organized the event and brought the plants. Her green thumb tends to our plants that are kept at her home.

The Spring field trip was taken on April 30th where nine members met at Larry Bates Nursery in Forest Hill,



Photo Fred Newlan

▲ Photo 4— Mike White helping plant the Klimavicz Legacy Garden in Meadowlark Gardens, in Vienna, VA, on April 1.

▼ Photo 5— Stephanie Bates, TX Chapter member Daphne Templin, and Larry Bates (l to r) at Bates Nursery in Forest Hills, LA, as he explains his massive camellia nursery operation.



Photo Barbara Stump

LA. Over 300 varieties of grafted camellias were seen in well-organized beds and greenhouses. Larry shared so much information that was both interesting and useful. Thanks to Larry and his wife, Stephanie, for conducting this fun and enjoyable tour. [Photos 5-6] After the tour and purchasing camellias, we gathered for lunch at La Tierra Restaurante. Several members continued on to visit other area nurseries to buy azaleas.

Our Spring meeting is May 11th in Nacogdoches, with a follow-up cutting/rooting party on May 25th.

Texas Chapter welcomes new members Theresa Fountain, Sue and Douglas Law, Becky and Steven Martin, and Daphne Templin, Nacogdoches; and Vickie and John Lange, Houston.

Texas Forest Country Chapter

Robert Thau—President

Our March 11, 2019 meeting was held at the Woman's Civic Center in Jasper, Texas, with 14 members present. The main topic was our 31th annual Azalea Festival, which was held on March 16. The chapter had a booth to promote the ASA and a plant sale, which was a great success.

The three-phase Jasper beautification project is in its planning stages. Our first-stage planting of azaleas was planned for this fall, but we moved the date up. (See accompanying article, p. 36.) We will keep you updated on progress of this project.

The chapter is planning workshops on propagation, care, and proper planting of azaleas in the upcoming months. We continue to offer tours of Nature's Way Gardens to attract new members.

The chapter welcomes new Texas members Earline Barrow and Hugh and Beth Pickle, Jasper; and Christine and Gerald Schmelebeck, Buna.

Vaseyi Chapter

The chapter welcomes new member Gail Lunsford, Marshall, NC.

At-large Members

The ASA welcomes six new at-large members: Richard J. Lasonde, Portsmouth, NH; New York members Brian P. Grubb (North Salem), James Rich (Rhinebeck), and Clare and Daniel Schoenheimer (Sag Harbor); and Annette Shrader, Clarksville, TN.

▼ Photo 6— Hoop house at Bates Nursery, showing early stages of camellia grafting propagation.



Photo Barbara Stump