

Chapter News and New Members

Arkansas Chapter

Ronnie Palmer—President

The chapter's quarterly meeting, held October 8, 2019 was called to order by Ronnie Palmer at approximately 1:30 p.m. There were 16 members present at the meeting and 1 guest, Alle Theil.

Minutes from the previous meeting were read by Donna Palmer and accepted as read with one correction. Bob Benbow gave the Treasurer's report, which was approved and received for the record.

Old business: the minutes mentioned that there was a discussion of local dues, and that while there was discussion there had not been any motion before the membership. After a brief discussion, Janet Rensing made a motion, "That we do not have any local dues at this time, and the only dues would be on the National level paid annually." The motion was seconded and carried by vote. None opposed.

New Business: Election of Officers:

The following officers were nominated in their respective positions held in 2019, Ronnie Palmer President; Steve Brizzi Vice President; and Bob Benbow Treasurer. Janet Rensing was nominated for Secretary and agreed to take the position. Ronnie expressed that next year we would follow a more defined policy for elections wherein there would be a nominating committee for future elections.

Janet Rensing informed the group that Lonoke County Master Gardeners would be hosting an Education Expo on April 18, 2020 and has invited the Arkansas Chapter to attend and sell plants. Ronnie talked to us about the prospect of our group purchasing azaleas from Gary Howell Nursery near Mobile, Alabama, and then re-selling them at the Expo. Bob Benbow made a motion that we set a limit of \$400 to purchase the azaleas. The motion was seconded and carried. None opposed. Ronnie and Bob will get together to make the plant selections. Ronnie will be traveling to Gary Howell's to purchase the plants later.

The next meeting will be held on February 11, 2020.

Upcoming events:

- Plant Sale at "From the Ground Up Education Expo" April 18, 2020; volunteers will be needed to help sell plants.
- The cutting party will be held at Azalea Hill Nursery, June 20, 2020, at 9:00 am. Ronnie asked all of us to bring cuttings if we had them for sharing.
- The fall meeting will be held on October 20, 2020.

Phyllis Kirtley suggested that we purchase the necessary equipment to have available for presentation of slide shows, and/or other video presentations. Steve Brizzi said that he would investigate purchasing a projector and the necessary cables and let us know the cost of the equipment. The equipment used at the past meetings was provided by Debbie Atchison and she doesn't mind bringing the equipment in

the future. The business meeting was adjourned at 2:10.

The meeting was followed by a presentation by Steve Brizzi, highlighting a fall blooming azalea found in a landscape in Northwest Arkansas. Steve directed us to the National ASA Azalea data base where we attempted to determine what variety of azalea it was. Ronnie also assisted in showing us several areas on the website that are very useful. Steve showed us his propagation skills from the cuttings taken in 2018. He indicated that most of his cuttings became viable plants, even the ones that the deer munched on. One interesting note is that when propagating azaleas, cuttings and layering seemed to be the best method. You can obtain seeds from the ASA, but Donna and Ronnie both pointed out that may be a much more difficult method.

A brief discussion followed on hybridizing, a lot of science behind it, and patience needed.

Additionally, Steve told us about the Legacy Project founded by the ASA. The Legacy Project is a means of increasing knowledge about azalea hybridizers and their hybrids. It also encourages the propagation and introduction of these hybrids to a wider population. Steve indicated that he would contact the Ozark Botanical Garden to determine if the garden would be interested in establishing a Legacy

▼ Photo 1—Possible azaleaodendron seen in a residential Arkansas landscape.



Photo Steve Brizzi

Garden there.

Photo 1 is the picture that Steve shared with all of us. Ronnie spoke to Earl Sommerville and he thinks it is an "azaleadendron." He is checking with his rhododendron buddies about the identification; we hope to be able to provide everyone an update in the future. That makes this mystery even more interesting.

Special Note: Phyllis Kirtley informed us that our member Charlotte Roush passed away on September 27, 2019 at the age of 72. She is survived by her husband Gary Roush.

Ben Morrison Chapter

Diane Reinke—Secretary

Members of the Ben Morrison Chapter and the Potomac Valley Chapter of the American Rhododendron Society (ARS) gathered on October 23 at historic London Town and Gardens in Edgewater, Maryland, overlooking the South River, to dedicate a memorial bench in honor of Henry Gray Carter, who passed away in 2018 at age 97. Gray was a member of three ARS chapters and the Ben Morrison Chapter of the ASA. Gray grew many plants, most of which were shared with fellow gardeners in the Mid-Atlantic region. (Photos 2 and 3)

Leading off the list of speakers at the dedication, Joe Miller gave a brief history of the memorial bench project. Welcoming remarks were then given by Meenal Harankhedkar, Director of Horticulture at London Town. Lois Duffy provided biographical remarks about Gray and

▼ Photo 2—Gray Carter shown in Ginter Botanical Garden next to deciduous hybrid 'Aromi Sunny-Side-Up'.



Photo Don Hyatt

his contributions to the Ben Morrison Chapter and the ARS Potomac Valley and Mason Dixon Chapters. Don Hyatt and Carol Segree spoke about the plants donated to London Town in memory of Gray by the Northern Virginia Chapter of ASA and the Potomac Valley and Mason Dixon ARS Chapters. Don Hyatt then led a champagne toast to Gray. Attendees toured the London Town gardens and enjoyed a light lunch in the gazebo there. (Photo 4)

The Ben Morrison Chapter is also saddened by the passing of Dave Holm in October 2019. Dave was active in chapter activities for several years until he relocated to New York. Dave chaired the plant sale at the 2004 ASA National Convention held in Bowie, Maryland. Dave and his wife Eileen traveled in 2005 to Gregory Bald and Roan Mountain with Don Hyatt, Bob and Rosa McWhorter, and other azalea enthusiasts. The chapter held a potting party at Dave's home where chapter members repotted azalea cuttings that he had rooted and cared for in his greenhouse. The plants were later



Photo Don Hyatt

▲ Photo 3—Bench dedicated by Ben Morrison Chapter and placed this spring.

▼ Photo 4—ARS and ASA people turned out to toast Gray at the bench dedication. Seated (l to r): Carol Segree, Phyllis Rittman, Don Hyatt, Joe Miller. Standing (l to r): Harold Belcher, Bill and Gabrielle Scott, Richard Mohr, Rosa and Bob McWhorter, Diane Reinke, Donn and Louise Tuebner, Budne Reinke, Lois Duffy, Linda and Ray Smith, Mike Duffy, Steve Morrison, Bee Hobbs, Richard Bradshaw



Photo Don Hyatt

given to members, and some may have been sold at the plant sale.

The Ben Morrison Chapter hopes to end the year's activities with a holiday party.

Central Carolinas Chapter

Kevin McCorkle—President

For our early October meeting at University of North Carolina Charlotte Botanical Gardens McMillan Greenhouse, noted educator Dr. Charles Horn presented "Wild Azaleas of the Western Carolinas". Professor of Biology at Newberry College, Dr. Horn has worked over a decade to refine the identification, distribution, and ecology of the *Rhododendron* species native to the western Carolinas. Dr. Horn has done extensive research on the ecology of the South Carolina endemic May White Azalea (*Rhododendron eastmanii*), including documentation of known distribution, ecology, and flowering times. (Photo 5). During his presentation, Dr. Horn shared his experiences with the wild azaleas, including some challenges in native species identification in the western Carolinas. (Photo 6)

Our annual end of year meeting in early November at McMillan Greenhouse was a members only event that

included a buffet lunch of locally smoked NC pulled pork barbeque and sides. Dr. Larry Mellichamp moderated a group discussion based on his ever growing and sometimes controversial list of "Garden Maxims." Included in the discussion were the pros and cons of the use of peat in planting mixes, the observed benefits of gypsum and Epsom salts as planting mix amendments, and other words of gardening wisdom. The meeting concluded with our traditional silent auction of special plants, including many Strickland hybrids, several Perkins hybrid seedlings, a Roseshell Azalea (*Rhododendron prinophyllum*) from Arkansas, and some hard to find hybrid evergreen azaleas. The auction was made more entertaining by Dr. Mellichamp's contribution of 15 to 20 choice non-rhododendron companion plants including Mountain Silky Camellia (*Stewartia ovata*), Golden Larch (*Pseudolarix amabilis*), the rarely offered NC native Shale Barrens Pussy Toes (*Antennaria virginica*), and a nice specimen of Alexandrian/Poet's Laurel (*Danae racemosa*).

The chapter welcomes new member Lynn Small of Sophia, North Carolina.

Louisiana Chapter

Robert Lee—Member

Dr. Allen Owings was awarded the Fellows Award from the International Plant Propagators Society-Southern Region at their annual conference held this year in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. (Photo 7) The IPPS website had this to say about Allen's work over the years: "Dr. Allen Owings, while working for the LSU Extension Service, served the ornamental horticulture industry with research, outreach, and teaching. But Dr. Owings' generosity of spirit and selflessness lead him to work with numerous horticulture related groups and give hours of support to the industry above and beyond the call of duty. His outgoing personality and willingness to work has made him friends too numerous to ever count."

The chapter welcomes new members Chen Aoshuang of Baton Rouge, and Denise Lanclous of Lafayette.

Northern Virginia Chapter

Barry Sperling—Corresponding Secretary

An active fall has continued with the annual auction and plant sale in September, a lecture by the well-known speaker Don Hyatt on "Things I've Tried That Died," continuing work upgrading the conditions surrounding the Klimavicz Display Garden at Meadowlark Gardens in Vienna, Virginia, and will finish with the annual Holiday Social and business meeting, hosted this year by Jean and Lars Larson.

As always, Carolyn Beck was our volunteer coordinator for the auction/sale and Paul Beck supplied the computer support for all sales that were barcoded, scanned, and registered on a database, as well as allowing credit cards for purchases. Many who hauled tables and pots around, as well as cleaning up afterwards, included Carol Allen, Rick and Susan Bauer, Paul Davis, Pati Gabaldoni, Ralph Habegger, Don Hyatt, Lars Larson, Diane Marcus, David and Patsy Meadows, Dave and Leslie Nanney, Dan Neckel, Barry Sperling, Robert Thau (from Texas!) and Andrea Scurlock.



Photo Charles Horn

▲ Photo 5—*Rhododendron eastmanii* or May White azalea, a long-time focus of Dr. Charles Horn's research.

▼ Photo 6— The rare *Rhododendron vaseyi*, also known as the Pinkshell azalea, one of the first species azaleas to bloom in the spring.



Photo Charles Horn



Photo Buddy Lee

▲ Photo 7—Bobby Green (left) presented the 2019 IPPS-Southern Region Fellows Award to Allen Owings.



Photo Barry Sperring

▲ Photo 8—Members assisting with delivery of auction plants (l to r): Paul Beck (at computer), Dave Nanney, Rick Bauer, Paul Davis.

Mike and Debbie White, of White's Nursery donated some plants for the live auction, too. (Photo 8)

Work on making the Klimavicz Display Garden a showpiece this year included the volunteer efforts of Carolyn and Paul Beck, Joanne and Dan Neckel, David Meadows, Dave Nanney, Rick and Susan Bauer, Lars Larson, Joe Gutierrez, Mike White, Richard Mohr, Dick Cecka, Fred Newlan, Don Hyatt, and Anne Marie and Marianna McKinnon.

Of special note, Elizabeth and Roy Cosby recently donated 135 azaleas to the club.

Also, our club donated 51 Klimavicz and 39 McDonald cultivars to the Jenkins Arboretum in Devon, PA.

We expect the activities to continue past the Holiday Social in December and through 2020. Join us!

The chapter welcomes new member Jimmy Yang of Warrenton, VA.

Reverend John Drayton Chapter

The chapter welcomes new member Tim Charpia of Summerville, SC.

Texas Chapter

Caryl Hall—Secretary

The Texas Chapter met at the Pineywoods Native Plant Center on the SFASU campus in Nacogdoches, Texas, October 30, 2019.

The sticking party last spring has resulted in several hundred plants that will be sold at future plant sales to raise money for horticulture scholarships. This year's scholarship winners were very appreciative of the money and sent great thank you notes. The 2020 March ASA convention was discussed as well as future trips to various gardens and nurseries. The next chapter plant sale will be held in conjunction with the Tyler Azalea Trail in Spring 2020, soon after the 2020 convention in Houston.

Next spring there will be a joint meeting with the Texas Forest Country and Louisiana Chapters in Jasper, Texas. Current officers were re-elected for a second term in 2020. With sadness we report that we lost member Cecil Settle of Pearland, TX, in September.

The chapter welcomes the Nacogdoches Convention and Visitor's Bureau and Gary Brock of Houston as new members of the Texas Chapter.

The Texas Forest Country Chapter

Robert Thau—President

The chapter held its fall meeting on October 14; our first order of business was the election of officers for 2020. Our chapter voted to have our current officers serve another term. Another topic we discussed was the preparation for our upcoming fall festival. We had a booth at the event, with azaleas not common in this area for sale to the public. The festival went well, with the chapter signing up two new members.

The beautification project of the Sandy Creek Park is well on its way; most of the structures are erected and one of the parking lots is in progress. It's getting that time of the year to winterize our gardens and wait for spring to arrive.

The chapter welcomes new members Loren and Lisa Hassinger and Steve and Colleen Garcia, all of Jasper, TX.

Vaseyi Chapter

The chapter welcomes new member Rob Kuetemeyer of Asheville, SC.

New At-large Members

The ASA welcomes new At-large members Booker Moritz, Verona, VA and Jim Sproul, Bakersfield, CA.