

Chapter News



Buddy Lee spoke at the “Azaleas 101” educational program held in October and hosted by the Louisiana Chapter.

Louisiana Chapter *Allen Owings, President*

The Louisiana Chapter held an “Azaleas 101” educational workshop at the Ira Nelson Horticulture Center on the campus of the University of Louisiana–Lafayette on October 15th. The speakers were Buddy Lee, director of plant innovations for Plant Development Services, Inc.; Allen Owings, professor emeritus of horticulture from the LSU AgCenter; and, Denise Lanclos, chairperson of Lafayette’s Azalea Trail.

Buddy Lee led off the program and discussed ways to propagate azaleas from seed, tips for plant breeding and development, and the history of azaleas. He spoke about the popular Encore® azaleas and the seven varieties that debuted in 1996. These original varieties were selected from 35,000 seedlings over the course of many years. Autumn Rouge® was Buddy’s first Encore® and remains his favorite. Others that he noted include Autumn Embers® and Autumn Twist®. The two newest Encore® azaleas that debuted in 2021 are Autumn Starburst® and Autumn Majesty®. There are now 33 Encore® varieties with more coming.

Denise Lanclos discussed the history of azaleas in Lafayette, Louisiana, and highlighted details of the ASA national convention to be held in south Louisiana in March 2022.

Allen Owings concluded the program with details on azalea care: planting, bed preparation, soil pH, fertilizer, irrigation, pruning, insect management, and disease information. He also noted some of the series of azaleas that are popular and

included notes on the branded/patented azaleas that are being marketed regionally and national at the current time such as the Bloom N Again®, ReBloom™, Bloom A Thon®, FloraMore®, Evermore®, Deja Blooms®, and Perfecto Mundo® varieties. Future “Azaleas 101” workshops are being planned in Louisiana and Mississippi during 2022 and 2023.



The Northern Virginia Chapter hosted its 14th annual Fall Azalea Sale at Kirkwood Presbyterian Church in Springfield, VA. Photo by Rick Bauer.

Northern Virginia Chapter *Rick Bauer, President*

The chapter held its final plant sale for the year on September 25th with our 14th annual Fall Azalea Sale at Kirkwood Presbyterian Church in Springfield, VA. We had a wide variety of plants for sale, including many hybridized by chapter and society hybridizers. Plant sales are one of the output products of the Legacy Project, allowing us to share these hybrids with the general public. This was a very successful sale. We sold 160 azaleas and, more importantly, we signed up four new members for our chapter.

Speaking of the Legacy Project, the chapter has been working with Jenkins Arboretum in Devon, PA, to develop a Holly Springs Legacy Garden. In the past three years, we have donated 216 Holly Springs azaleas to Jenkins. On October 18, Paul and Carolyn Beck donated an additional 26 large Holly Springs azaleas. Most were more than 30 years old and will serve as a backdrop for the smaller donated plants. Steve Wright, Director of Horticulture/Curator of Plant Collections and Jake



The Northern Virginia Chapter donated azaleas Holly Springs Legacy Garden at the Jenkins Arboretum in Devon, PA. Photo by Carolyn Beck.



The Northern Virginia Chapter hosted a hybrid meeting for both in person and virtual attendees in October. Photo by Rick Bauer.

Summers, Hamilton Educational Fellow and project manager of the Holly Springs Legacy Garden, picked up the azaleas. Since many of the plants were over 200 pounds, it was great to have some younger blood load them onto the truck! We look forward to seeing the garden in bloom next spring.

On October 24, we held our fall meeting. Larry Jones, from the Virginia Master Gardeners, gave an interesting talk on “Attracting Pollinators to the Garden.” This was our first hybrid meeting, with in person attendees and others joining us via Zoom. In addition to the presentation, we had a plant exchange. We had a large number of azaleas and other plants for our attendees to add to their collections.

Finally, many in the society know Paul and Carolyn Beck. Both have contributed to our chapter and the society in many ways resulting in them being recognized in 2016 with the society’s Exceptional Service Award. They also make considerable contributions to the American Rhododendron Society (ARS). As a result, they were awarded the ARS’s Bronze Medal award in June. Congratulations!

Texas Chapter *Sherrie Randall, Secretary*

The Texas Chapter held their first meeting in two years at the SFA Pineywoods Native Plant Center in Nacogdoches on October 15th. President David Creech suggested the chapter focus on the gardens and plant collections this coming year. Hopefully, our first event will be the planting of numerous azaleas in the SFA Gardens following a “good” rain. Plantings have previously been well attended by chapter members, so we’re hoping to see more members return.

Next event proposed was a field trip to Bud Willis’ nursery in Louisiana on November 12th. Bud has an extensive collection of rhododendrons that the chapter would like to purchase to grow up for the SFA Gardens or to sell at plant sales.

For a 2022 spring day outing, members picked a visit to the Longview Botanical Gardens, lunch, then on to the Tyler Botanical Gardens. Date TBD.

Closing out the meeting was the selection of officers for 2021/2022: David Creech, President; Barbara Stump, Vice-President; Donna Vandermolen, Treasurer; and, Sherrie Randall, Secretary.



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