

# Tyler Azalea & Spring Flower Trail

By Susan Travis—Tyler, TX

No other town in Texas lays claim to a budding heritage quite like Tyler. Tucked serenely in East Texas, Tyler is home to some of the state's most bountiful gardens and is most known for its roses. However, in March and April the roses take a back seat to azaleas during the annual Azalea & Spring Flower Trail.

While oil booms gave Tyler an economic head start in the 1930s, azalea and rose blooms gave the city its beauty. Azaleas were introduced to Tyler in 1929 by Maurice Shamburger, one of the city's early nurserymen. Pleased with results of a test garden of azaleas, Shamburger shipped the colorful plants to Tyler by the boxcar loads from Georgia.

After completing his garden in 1929, Shamburger discussed the beautification potential of azaleas with Mrs. Sara Butler of the *Tyler Courier Times Telegraph*. Mrs. Butler not only encouraged Shamburger to promote azalea plantings in the city, but planted several bushes at her own home on Charnwood Street.

That home site, along with several other gardens

on Lindsey Lane, soon became springtime showplaces with their colorful azalea blooms, and Tylerites began buying the plants by the thousands.

By 1960, the blooming azaleas were attracting much attention, and that year the Chamber of Commerce established a marked route. The first Trail featured about 60 homes on a five-mile route.

The Trail was an instant success. Within two years it had expanded to 75 homes and was attracting 15,000 visitors. By 1964, 25,000 people a year were coming to see the azaleas. In 1986, it expanded by additional two miles.

Since then, the Azalea & Spring Flower Trail has grown into an annual spring affair with two trails winding through more than 10 miles of historic homes and gardens with blooming bushes and fresh flowers bursting with the colors of spring. Last year, more than 100,000 people visited the event.

Celebrated late March to the first of April, the Trail still rests on the efforts of private citizens who welcome thousands of strangers to their neighborhoods to showcase and support the city they love.

Since the mid-90s, Joan Pyron, and her late husband, Guy, have opened their private garden to visitors during the three weekends of Tyler's Azalea & Spring Trail. The garden has been featured in magazines across the country including *Southern Living* and *Better Homes and Gardens*. The Pyron home is where the Azalea & Spring Flower Trail ribbon-cutting and opening ceremonies have taken place the past several years.

"We open our garden to the public because we feel like it's our way of giving back to the community," Joan Pyron said. "Plus, we just love meeting the people who visit. There are people from as far away as China who have stopped by our garden."

This year's event is March 25–April 10 during which Tyler also hosts several city-wide events for everyone to enjoy including home tours, art exhibits, live entertainment, arts and crafts fairs, and much more. As a self-guided tour through Tyler's historic Azalea District, it is a safe event for the whole family to enjoy.

For more details about the Trail, an updated progress of the blooms, a full list of events, and more, go to [TylerAzaleaTrail.com](http://TylerAzaleaTrail.com).

Visit Tyler TEXAS

**AZALEA & SPRING FLOWER TRAIL**

MARCH 25 - APRIL 10, 2022

Visit Tyler TEXAS

TylerAzaleaTrail.com