

Chapter News

Arkansas Chapter

Janet Rensing, Secretary

The Arkansas Chapter held its fall meeting on November 5, 2022, at Azalea Hill, home of Ronnie (Chapter President) and Donna Palmer. It was a brisk morning with cloudy overcast skies, the typically beautiful fall colors of the Arkansas landscape were lackluster this year due to the drought conditions experienced over the summer. It reminded all of us of the importance of water and the affect that it has on our plants, in particular azaleas. Many of us walked the grounds admiring the vivid yellow fall color of the Sugar Maples, showing a stark contrast to the deep green of the rhododendrons and azaleas; we looked forward to the lunch that was being prepared, the smell of grilled hamburgers, filling the air, made our mouths water. The turnout for this event was significant considering the cooler weather, two of our newest members Emilie Monk of Bryant and her husband James Dicken, and Suzy Still of Hot Springs were in attendance bringing the total to 17 members. Bob Benbow was unable to attend. He is recovering from extensive back surgery.

During the meeting it was announced that the current officers, Ronnie Palmer, President; Steve Brizzi, Vice President; Janet Rensing, Secretary; Robert Benbow, Treasurer; and, Cheyenne Benbow, Co-Treasurer; had all agreed to continue in their respective positions for the 2023 year, a motion was made and carried. The meeting was more of a social gathering, wherein we all talked about attending the 2023 Conference in Atlanta. Ronnie asked for a show of hands who would be attending, and there were several people showing interest in the conference.

At the fall board meeting held in September, it was proposed and approved to offer a select group of azalea plants donated by Azalea Hill, as a gift to all our members who were interested in expanding their collection. After lunch, we all went outside and began collecting our plants—excited and rejuvenated not only by the gift, and the joy that one experiences when receiving a gift, but also by the sound of everyone's voices as we talked and shared our meal. We left our fall meeting looking forward to planting our plants and growing our chapter in 2023.



Northern Virginia Chapter

Rick Bauer, Corresponding Secretary

The Chapter held our annual fall azalea sale at Kirkwood Presbyterian Church in Springfield, VA, on 24 September. These sales are a great opportunity to introduce the public to beautiful varieties of azaleas not normally found in commercial nurseries. We had a great turnout of members to assist in the sale and we sold 119 plants. More importantly, we gained a new member, Keely Shaughnessy, from Germantown, MD.

The chapter has been involved in a number of Legacy Garden projects, including supporting the Potomac Valley Chapter of the American Rhododendron Society in their efforts to develop a Marshy Point Legacy Garden at Historic London Town and Gardens in Edgewater, MD. The chapter donated about 100 Marshy Point Azaleas to the garden in October.

On 30 October, we had a very well attended chapter meeting with speaker Joe Gutierrez (see photo by Rick Bauer above) who spoke on *Pruning Landscape Plants for Structure, Health and Architectural Interest*. He then conducted a workshop where interested members had the opportunity to practice pruning techniques.

We also had a plant exchange, which allowed our members to share their excess plants with others (and to acquire new plants for their gardens). We had a large number of azaleas available as well as companion plants.

Following the meeting the Executive Committee met to develop the schedule and to review the proposed budget for 2023. We also developed recommendations for end of year donations.