

The Azalean

Vol. 45 • No. 2 • Summer 2023

Journal of the Azalea Society of America



President's Letter

Charlie Andrews—Cumming, Georgia

We had a wonderful time in Georgia at the Joint ARS/ASA Convention. The weather was great, we saw some very nice gardens, and plants, and, best of all, talked shop with our friends. The Azalea Society is a great organization. It has much to offer to those of us who like azaleas and other plants.

We are a nonprofit 501(c)3 charitable organization that focuses on education; promotes understanding and skills in classification, hybridization, propagation, and culture of azaleas; encourages introduction of new species and hybrids; advances scientific knowledge; serves as a clearing house of information; and increases the bonds of fellowship among those who grow and appreciate azaleas.

We try hard to manage a tight operating budget. Our expense to produce *The Azalean* runs about \$19K each year, and our total dues revenue is approximately \$15K, or roughly half of the \$29K total revenue (Refer to the ASA Financial Statement on page 47 of this issue). By far, most of the operating expense each year is in producing *The Azalean*, an excellent publication, improving with every issue. Additional Society revenue sources are advertising in *The Azalean*, seed exchange, and dividends. These sources together do not cover the total shortfall in our operating expenses. We rely upon donations to make up the difference between revenue and expenses. In recent years, the donations by members have fallen off.

If enough of us regularly donated to the operating budget, we may not have to consider raising dues in the near future. Our annual dues are only \$30 US, \$45 Canada, and \$60 for all other countries. Additional donations to the operating fund will greatly help your society. You can pay online any time, including when you renew your membership before January 1. You may also pay by check. Donations are fully tax deductible.

Another method to help ASA is to consider putting a bequest to the Azalea Society of America in your will. Please consider these suggestions. We want to continue spreading the word about these wonderful plants.

~ Charlie



The Azalea Society of America, organized December 9, 1977 and incorporated in the District of Columbia, is an educational and scientific non-profit association devoted to the culture, propagation, and appreciation of azaleas which are in the subgenera *Tsutsusi* and *Pentanthera* of the genus *Rhododendron* in the Heath family (Ericaceae).

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Deadlines for *The Azalean*:

- Fall 2023 issue is due July 15, 2023
- Winter 2023 issue is due October 15, 2023
- Spring 2024 issue is due January 15, 2024
- Summer 2024 issue is due April 15, 2024

On the Cover

Piedmont azalea blooming at Gibbs Gardens during the ASA 2023 Annual Convention. Photo by Kathy Jentz.

Remember, you too can write for *The Azalean*!
To submit your articles and photos for publication, contact:
theazalean@gmail.com.



The Mysterious Baker of Ghent: Mysteries of Monsieur Mortier and the First Ghent Hybrids, Part 2

By Charles R. Andrews III—Cumming, Georgia

Introduction

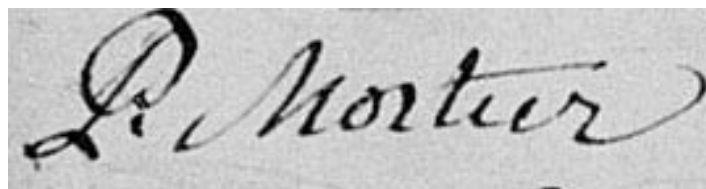
In Part 1 of this article in the Spring 2023 edition of *The Azalean*, we learned the little that was previously known about our mysterious P. Mortier, whose colorful deciduous azalea hybrids took the horticultural world by storm in the early 1800s. Now, as Paul Harvey so often said, here is “the rest of the story.”

The Veil Lifted

Part 1 identified the extent of what the world knew of P. Mortier until the year 2000, when a book written in Dutch appeared on Ghent Azaleas. Albert de Raedt, a member of the Belgium Dendrology Society, was bitten by the azalea bug, specifically a variant we call the deciduous azalea bug. On a trip with his dendrology society to England in 1987, de Raedt saw azaleas in full bloom and realized that they were Hardy Ghents and Rusticas, plants that originated in his Belgium homeland. He returned home determined to discover everything he could about these plants and began searching for existing cultivars. De Raedt teamed with Jozef Delvaux to find, document, and collect samples of these plants to save the gene pool of this old and large hybrid group from extinction. During his research, de Raedt located a man who turned out to be Mortier’s great-great-grandson. This man, Pierre Mortier, provided information to de Raedt, which revealed precisely who was our mysterious P. Mortier, and put him in touch with Sabine de Groote, an art historian. De Groote had written a series of articles on Ghent families, including some of the hybridizers involved with these early hybrids. De Raedt and de Groote documented the history of these plants and their hybridizers in 2000 in the book *De Harde Gentse Azalea: Een Historisch Overzicht* (*The Hardy Ghent Azalea: An Historical Overview*). Much of the personal information on the hybridizers was contributed by de Groote. De Groote’s information was merged with de Raedt’s in the chapter “Origin and Development of the Hardy Ghents.”¹⁶



Azalea Mortieriana, Hort.
*Annales de la Société Royale
d'Agriculture de Gand* v2, 1846.



Mortier's signature.

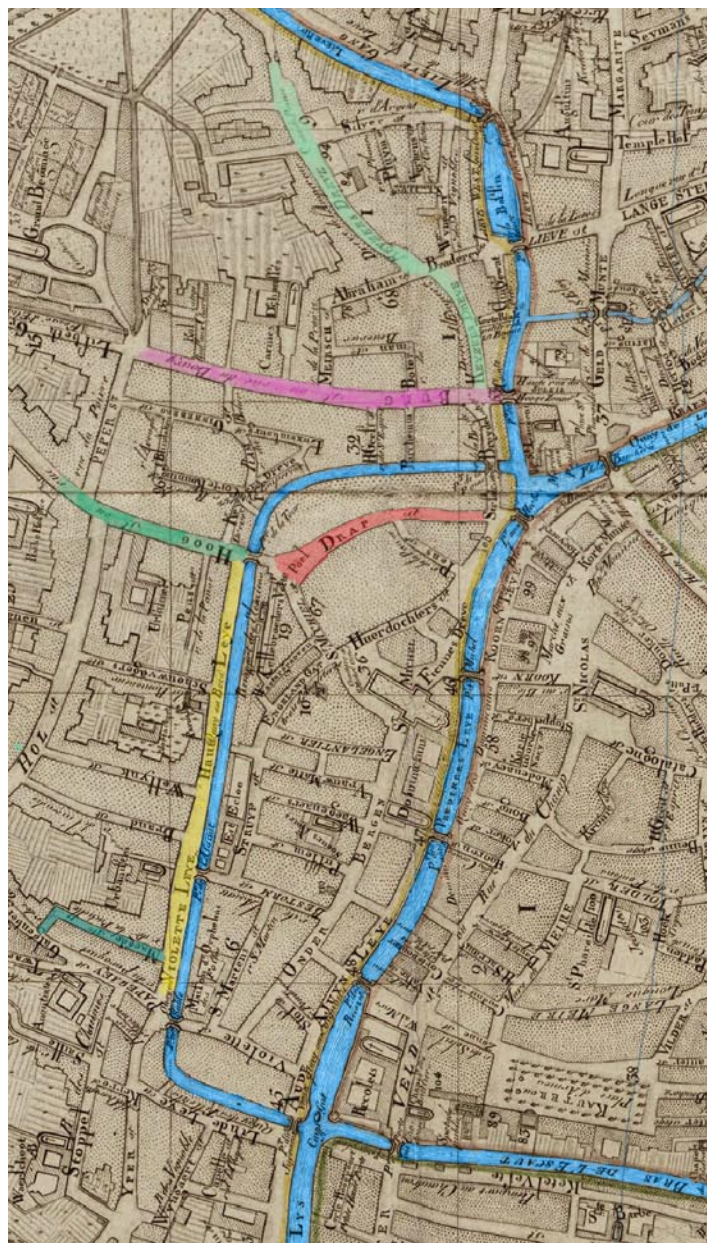
After 200 years of Mortier being a shadowy figure, we now know that our mysterious “P. Mortier” was Petrus Martinus Mortier (1768-1847). *Petrus* is a Latinized name derived from Greek, meaning “rock.” This Latin form was sometimes used for Dutch and on occasion for German names. In Belgium, the French *Pierre* or Dutch *Pieter* is often substituted. In English, he would be *Peter*. The Latin *Martinus* is the official Dutch form of *Martin* seen on old birth certificates, but those so named often go by *Maarten* or *Marten*.¹⁷

Petrus Martinus Mortier’s parents were Joannes Baptiste Mortier and Joanna De Clercq. Pierre was born in St. Michael’s North Parish in Ghent on 3 Oct 1768. He first married Isabelle Antoinette Smesmans or Smesman (27 Dec 1765–10 Aug 1815) in St. Michael North Parish on 23 Feb 1794. She was a daughter of George Smesmans and Anne Marie Dupré. Pierre and Isabelle had four sons: Joannes Martinus Mortier, Jean Daniel Mortier (died as infant), Lodewijk Petrus Mortier, and Joseph Pierre Mortier.

The death certificate of Isabelle in 1815 states that she was 50 at the time of her death and that her husband was a baker. Mortier died 11 Jan 1847, and his death certificate states that he was 78 years old. It also states that he was the widower of both Isabelle Smesmans and Maria Elisabeth Vervaet.¹⁸

Mortier is a name derived from a word meaning a bowl in which a pestle is used to crush pills and other substances; a mixture of lime, sand, and cement; and a short cannon. A mortarium is a Roman pottery bowl. Mortier is not a common name, but neither is it rare. One amateur genealogist has charted his ancestry to the 1600s, back to his great-great-great grandparents: Petrus Martinus Mortier (1768-1847) < (p) Joannes Baptiste Mortier (1728-1799) & Joanna De Clercq (1743-1779) < (gp) Martinus Mortier (1692-) & Jeanne Naessens (1704-) < (ggp) Adrianus Mortier (1641-1714) & Elisabeth Stepman (1657-1716) < (2ggp) Balduinus Mortier (1608-1676) & Elisabeth Wille (1608-) < (3ggp) Joannes Mortier (-) & Livina Verstraeten (-).¹⁹

Establishing contact with several of Mortier’s descendants led to additional details. His grandfather Martinus was a *jardinier* (gardener). Pierre and Isabelle appear to have financial means, for his son Lodewijk Petrus (Louis Pierre) Mortier, attended the Ghent Academy, now University of Ghent, and



Old part of town from 1799 map of Ghent by Louis De Vreese, with pertinent streets highlighted.

became a lawyer. Louis Pierre’s 200-page thesis in 1828 was a response to the question “What part did the Belgians have in the Holy Wars, and what fruits did they receive from them?” Louis Pierre married a daughter of a tobacco manufacturer, and for several generations the family was successful in the tobacco industry before moving into sprinklers for horticulture and agriculture. Auguste Joseph Mortier, a great grandson of our baker, served in *Heilig-Kerstparochie* (Holy Christmas Parish) as a well-respected parish pastor for 25 years.²⁰

Albert de Raedt and Sabine de Groote found information about the Hardy Ghents and their hybridizers in newspapers of the day. Some issues are now digitized and online. By checking in Ghent news-

papers from the early 19th century, we found various people named Mortier. Contemporary newspapers in Ghent provide bits of information on our P. Mortier, the baker-florist. Advertisements for the sale of Mortier's plants can be found at least from 1815 to 1838. Mortier may have held his last public sale in 1833. As mentioned, Van Hulle tells us that Mortier sold the last of his azalea hybrids to Louis Verschaffelt in 1834. In 1838, a botanist named Hoste included some of Mortier's azaleas in a public sale.²¹

The earliest records suggest he lived on *Burgstraat* near the *Hoogbrugge*. That was the location of his bakery and residence when he participated at the Frascati. At the time of his death in 1847, he was living on *Drapstraat*. Mortier's address and garden is given at times as *Magdestraetjen* No. 2 and as *Purcelle* No. 2. These two are the same address, the former in Dutch and the latter in French. Both translate in English as "Little Virgin Street." *Magdestraetjen* was described in one advertisement as *by de houtleye*. Dug in the mid-12th century as a semi-elliptical canal off the River Leie for city's western defense, this canal was called the Houtlei (Main Canal). Foul odor and constant silting led to it being filled in at the end of the nineteenth century. A canal or quay in Ghent was referred to as a *lei* or *leye*, after the River Leie. *Oude Houtlei* is now a north-south

street in Ghent in the west central portion of the old city between the Coupure Canal and the River Leie. Today, a small street named *Maagdestraat* enters into the west side of *Oude Houtlei* near the street's south end. In 1833, about the time Mortier sold the last of his hybrids, his address was *Princenhof* No. 10, at the south end. *Princenhof* was once called *Keysers Dreve*. In September 1833, Mortier's son, the lawyer, of *Prinsenhof* [sic], married Adelaïde Dullaert, of Ste. Margrietestraet. The wedding certificate states that "Petrus Mortier," father of "Ludovicus Petrus Mortier" (Louis Pierre) was retired.²² We can imagine that Pierre Mortier, the baker and hybridizer, was then living together with his son, Louis Pierre Mortier. Today, *Prinsenhof* is a NW-to-SE street about five blocks above the north end of *Oude Houtlei*. *Burgstraat* is a W-to-E street below *Prinsenhof*. *Hoogbrugge* or *Hoofbrugge* was the bridge where *Burgstraat* crossed the Leive, a tributary of the Leie. Mortier's bakery on *Burgstraat* may have been near the bridge area.

The Ghent Hybrids

From the 1820s through the 1830s, the number of Ghent Hybrids exploded. Collectively, the early hybrids were called *Rhododendron Mortieri*, *Azalea Mortieriana*, and *Hardy Ghent Azaleas*. H. J. Van Hulle called them Ghent *Rustica Azaleas* (*Les Azalées Rustiques de Gand*) to distinguish

Loddiges Catalogue of Plants 1830

<i>hybridae-belgicae</i>				
<i>amœnissima</i>	<i>exquisita</i>	<i>miniata</i>	<i>præstantissima</i>	<i>speciosissima</i>
<i>ardens</i>	<i>flamboyante</i>	<i>mixta triumphans</i>	<i>pulchella</i>	<i>splendens</i>
<i>atrorubens</i>	<i>fulgida</i>	<i>munica</i>	<i>punicea</i>	<i>splendida</i>
<i>calendulacea-insignis</i>	<i>gloria-mundi</i>	<i>morterii</i>	<i>recentissima</i>	<i>variegata</i>
<i>cardon</i>	<i>gloriosa</i>	<i>ne plus ultra</i>	<i>regina belgica</i>	<i>venusta</i>
<i>concinna</i>	<i>guilielmus primus</i>	<i>nobilis</i>	<i>rigida incarnata</i>	<i>venustissima</i>
<i>cruenta</i>	<i>hilarissima</i>	<i>novitata</i>	<i>robusta</i>	<i>versicolor</i>
<i>cupræa-eximia</i>	<i>hybrida micans</i>	<i>ornata</i>	<i>rubricata</i>	
<i>electa</i>	<i>lepida</i>	<i>pontica globosa</i>	<i>sanguinea</i>	
<i>elegantissima</i>	<i>maritima incarnata</i>	<i>pontica konick</i>	<i>speciosa</i>	
		<i>pontica</i>		
		<i>glauc</i>	<i>lactea</i>	
<i>alba</i>		<i>flammea</i>	<i>ochroleuca</i>	
<i>aurantia</i>		<i>fulgens</i>	<i>pallida</i>	
<i>crocata</i>		<i>ignescens</i>	<i>tricolor</i>	
<i>cupræa</i>				

J. C. Loudon listed 95 Belgian Hybrid varieties in 1838. By 1850, reportedly, there were over 500 named varieties available from various sources.²⁵

VENDITIE VAN EXTRA SCHOONE PLANTEN.

Donderdag 6 april 1820, ten dry uren naer middag, zal d'heer Mortier, liefhebber, publiquelyk laeten verkoopen, in zynen hof gelegen in het maegdestraetjen, by de houtleye, door het ministerie van den deurwaerder *Lefevre*, het grootste gedeelte van zyne schoone collectie van Planten, als alle de exquisite soorten van Magnolias, waer onder van 6 à 7 voeten hoog, vele schoone soorten en varieteyten van Rhododendrons, Azaleas, Pioen-boomen met bloembotten, eene groote plante van *Rosa banksiana*, op eygen wortel, verscheyde soorten van Oragne-boomen, vele schoone Camellias en menigvuldige andere van de beste planten voor den vollen grond en 't groenhuis.

Translation of the above newspaper advertisement from the *Gazette van Gend*, 03 April 1820, p3 c2:

SALE OF EXTRA BEAUTIFUL PLANTS.

Thursday 6 April 1820, at three hours after noon, Mr. Mortier, enthusiast, will sell publicly in his garden located in the maegdestraetjen, by the Houtleye, by the ministeric of the bailiff Lefevre, the largest part of his beautiful collection of plants, like all the exquisite varieties of Magnolias, 6 to 7 feet high, many beautiful kinds and varieties of Rhododendrons, Azaleas, Peony trees with flower buds, a large plant of *Rosa banksiana*, on its own roots, several kinds of Orange trees, many beautiful Camellias, and many other of the best plants for the open ground and greenhouse.

VERKOOPING VAN PLANTEN,
Waer onder eene schoone collectie
Geraniums en Azalea, Orangerie-
Planten enz.,

Ten buyze van Mr. P. MORTIER, Princen-
hof n.º 10, Zaterdag 18 Mey 1833, ten vier
uren naermiddag, door de Greffiers **DE**
POBBE en **VERHULST**, in Gend.

Translation of the newspaper advertisement at left from the *Gazette van Gend*, 12 May 1833, 05 12 p3 c2:

Sale of Plants,

This is a beautiful collection of Geraniums and Azalea, Orangery Plants, etc., at the home of Mr. P. Mortier, Princenhof nbr. 10, Saturday May 18, 1833, at 4 o'clock in the afternoon, by the Registrars de Porre & Verhulst, in Ghent.

V E N D I T I E

Van eene nytmuntende collectie van Pot-bloemen, voor-dezen
noyt in deze stad Gend gezien, op maendag 10 july 1815, ten vier
uren naer middag, in den hof van P. Mortier, in het Maegdestraet-
jen n.º 2, nytkomende op de Houtleye in Gend.

Translation of the above newspaper advertisement from the *Gazette van Gend*, 06 July 1815, p3 c1:

SALE

Of a unique collection of potted flowers, never before seen in this city of Ghent, on Monday, July 10, 1815, at four o'clock in the afternoon, in the garden of P. Mortier, in Maegdestraetjen No. 2 coming off the Houtleye in Ghent.

Vente de belles Plantes.

Le Sieur P. MORTIER fera vendre dans son jardin, rue de la Pu-
celle, N.º. 2, près le quai au Bois, à Gand, le Mercredi 21 Mars
1821, à trois heures de relevée, par l'Huissier LEFEBVRE, une su-
perbe collection de Plantes, consistant en azaleas, rhododendrons,
calmias, camelias, Magnolias, pivoines, etc.

Translation of the above newspaper advertisement from the *Journal d'Affiches de Gand, Bruges, Courtrai, et de Deux Flanders* 18 March 1821, p1:

Sale of beautiful plants

Le Sieur P. Mortier will sell in his garden, rue de la Pucelle, No. 2, near the wooden wharf in Ghent, on Wednesday, March 21, 1821, at three relief hours, by the bailiff LEFEBVER, a superb collection of Plants, consisting of azaleas, rhododendrons, kalmias, Magnolias, peonies, etc.

the hardy deciduous hybrid azaleas of Ghent from hot-house evergreen azaleas. Later, the name *Rustica Azaleas* came to be applied only to the double Ghent forms. Karl Koch Latinized all the Ghent Azaleas as *Azaleae gandavensae*. Alfred Rehder used *Rhododendron gandavense* specifically for the hybrids of American heritage that were crossed with *R. luteum*. In the Netherlands and in Germany, Ghent Hybrids were most often known as Pontica Azaleas. The name “Ghent Azaleas” eventually was applied to all these hybrids whether from the Continent or England between 1825 and 1880. Since 2010, “Ghent Azalea” has received a Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) that applies to azalea plants coming from licenced growers in East Flanders. These PGI Ghent Azaleas are, however, evergreen varieties.²³

Azalea pontica, variety *tricolor*, was listed for sale as early as 1823. This may have been the same variety seen in J. B. de Wulf’s garden in 1817. Francies Van Damme bought the stock plant *Azalea pontica* var. *tricolor* Wulf for 560 francs. From that investment, he sold more than 20,000 francs worth by 1829. Hybrid varieties *A. Morterii* var. *carnea* and *A. Morterii* var. *praestans* were listed in 1830, and a color illustration of *R. Morterii* var. *carnea* was published in 1831. Robert Sweet described these hybrids as intermediate between *R. calendulaceum* and a red variety of *R. nudiflorum*. These plants, named for Mortier, were part of a shipment received in 1829 from the Continent by the nursery firm of Whitley, Brames, and Milne of Fulham, London. *A. Morterii* var. *praestans* was received under the name *A. praestansissima*. While Sweet listed no Belgium hybrid azaleas in 1830, Conrad Loddiges listed in that year 47 varieties of Belgium hybrids as well as 12 separate pontica varieties.²⁴ (See **Loddiges Catalogue of Plants 1830** on page 30.)

Thomas Rivers, of the well-known nursery of Sawbridgeworth, Hertfordshire, England, reported on a horticulture tour of the Netherlands, Belgium, and France in 1830 and saw the Mortier azaleas in Belgium. In Bruges, he visited the garden of a brewer who had a special collection of azalea hybrids, including ‘Morterii Genio’, ‘Tricolor Jacobs’, ‘Mortieriana’, ‘Regina Belgica’, and others. In May of 1835, he wrote glowingly of Mortier azaleas, and, although primarily a grower of fruit trees and roses, Rivers obtained azaleas from Ghent. In 1842, Rivers advertised his “fine Belgic varieties,” listing 33 selections, including ‘Pontica



Morterii var. *carnea*
The British Flower Garden
 2nd series, t10, 1831.

tricolor’ Wulf, ‘*Coccinea speciosa*’, and ‘*Morterii genio*’.²⁶

Robert Osborn of the Fulham nursery of Whitby & Osborn evaluated the old varieties. As some of the best, he identified ‘Mortieri’, pink and orange; ‘Mortieriana’, similar but darker; and ‘Gloria Mundi’, an intense orange. Osborn considered ‘*Coccinea Major*’ the best of the old varieties and ‘*Ne Plus Ultra*’ the best Belgian hybrid, bright red and yellow.²⁷

Which of the early Ghent Hybrids are hybrids developed by Mortier himself is not possible to say with certainty. No catalog or list of individual cultivars from Mortier exist. Plants raised by him may have been named by others. We are left with Charles Van Geert’s statement, written 11 years after Mortier sold his last azalea hybrids, that nearly all the superb varieties now disbursed

throughout Europe were raised by him. Very few early catalogs still exist, but some of the earliest names of Ghent Hybrids came from catalogs of Loddiges and Sons (1826, 1830), Alexander Verschaffelt (1829, 1836), L'Institut Horticole de Fromont (1829), William Masters (1831), Pieter Verleeuwen (1835), Joost Verleeuwen (1835), and Jan Van Geert (1835, 1838, 1839). The Académie d'Horticulture in Ghent in 1860 ranked the best varieties at that time, indicating the breeders to whom they were attributed. Of the best 30, 25 were attributed to Mortier:

Adorée	Couronne Impériale
Glorie d'un parterre	Mutabilis
Astreans	Duc de Provence
Grandeur Triomphante	Nec Plus Ultra
Beauté de Royghem	Empereur Napoléon III
Grand Monarque	Optima
Bijou des Amateurs	Flameola Incarnata
Jules César	Reine de Pas Bas
Cardinal	Géant de Batailles
La Superbe	Rêve de Bonheur
Comble de Gloire	Gloria Mundi?
Minerve	Roy de Belges
Unique	

Archie Skinner identified 'Ignea Nova' and 'Coccinea Speciosa' as two of Mortier's hybrids. Fred Galle, however, listed the source of 'Coccinea Speciosa' as L. Seneclausse, before 1846. De Raedt listed 'Coccinea Speciosa' as Lisha Sénéclausse, before 1832. *The International Rhododendron Register and Checklist* (IRRC) listed 'Coccineum Speciosum' as introduced by L. Seneclausse, before 1836. In 1832, Jacob Ernst von Reider listed variety *Azalea coccinea speciosa nudiflora*. It should not be surprising that Reider placed it under *Azalea nudiflora*. He also placed several *R. calendulaceum* varieties under *A. nudiflora* as well as 'Gloria Mundi' and 'Nec Plus Ultra'. The IRRC listed 'Dulcedo', 'Invincible', 'Mortieri Carneus', and 'Nec Plus Ultra' as probably raised or introduced by Mortier. De Raedt suggested 'Duc de Provence', 'Flameola Incarnata', 'Mortierio Genio', 'Mortieriana', 'Mortierii', 'Nec Plus Ultra', and 'Optima', as in or possibly in Mortier's original collection. Yet, one cannot safely assume the varieties such as 'Mortierii', 'Mortierii Carneus', 'Mortierii Praestantissima', 'Mortierii Praestans', 'Mortieriana', 'Mortierii Genio', and similar names resulted from Mortier's hands.²⁸

The colorful Ghent Hybrids differ greatly. Some are dark and rich, others light and pastel. Many



Top: *pontica versicolor* (perhaps Loddiges' 'Versicolor'); Left: *cuprea eximia nova* ('Cuprium Eximium Novium'); Right: 'Nec Plus Ultra' ('Nec Plus Ultra'); Bottom: *pontica macrantha* (one of the deciduous 'Macranthum') *The Garden: An Illustrated Weekly Journal of Horticulture* 15: pl. 176, 19 Apr 1879.

are multicolored. There are whites and creams, yellows, pinks, oranges, orange-scarlets, and reds. Some corollas are often flushed or tinted with additional colors. A prominent blotch, characteristic of the flame azalea, is common. A *New York Times* article stated that 'Coccinea Speciosa' was a typical example of a Ghent Hybrid.²⁹ 'Coccinea Speciosa' appears to be more of a typical *R. flammeum* or small-flowered *R. calendulaceum*. It is difficult to say what is a typical Ghent Hybrid. It may be that some named varieties are not inter-species hybrids but no more than intra-species variation.

Gerald H. Pinckney, managing director in the 1950s of John Waterer, Sons & Crisp, in Bagshot, England, did not know the ploidies of the species or how ploidy affects crosses. He believed that *R. nudiflorum* (now *R. periclymenoides*) and *R. canescens* contributed to the Ghent pinks and whites. Not mentioned were *R. roseum* (now *R. prinophyllum*), *R. atlanticum*, and *R. viscosum*. He thought *R. luteum* provided the yellow and cream, while *R. calendulaceum* and *R. cumberlandense* were

T RIVERS, JUN., begs to offer the following choice varieties of HARDY RHODODENDRONS AND BELGIC AZALEAS. Healthy plants from 1 foot to 18 inches high, mostly from pots.

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1. Arboreum album . . .	10s. 6
2. Arboreum ponticum album . . .	7 6
3. Altaclerense . . .	3 6
4. " coccineum . . .	7 6
5. " splendens . . .	7 6
6. Angustum, robust and fine habit . . .	21 0
7. Eximium . . .	5 0
8. Formosum . . .	7 6
9. Hybridum, very strong plants . . .	3s. 6
10. Macranthum roseum . . .	7 6
11. Mundula, dwarf . . .	10 6
12. Nobilcanum, dwarf and early . . .	5 0
13. Nobilis, dwarf . . .	10 6
14. Princeps . . .	7 6
15. Russellianum . . .	5 0
16. Speciosum . . .	10 6
17. Strictum . . .	10 6

With exception of numbers 1 and 17, which are species, the above are hybrids. *R. arboreum*, numbers 1 and 2, have flowers of pure white without spot; numbers 3 to 15 have crimson and scarlet flowers, of different shades, with black spots.

1. Ponticum album . . .	1s. 6	13. Lowil . . .	5 0
2. Atro-rubens . . .	1 6	14. Magnolifolium . . .	1 6
3. Album multi-maculatum . . .	7 6	15. Nivaticum . . .	5 0
4. Contortum, very dwarf . . .	1 6	16. Pumilum . . .	1 6
5. Caucasicum album, or new white . . .	3 6	17. Roseum . . .	1 6
6. Coccineum . . .	3 6	18. Roseum flore-pleno . . .	10 6
7. Carneum maculatum . . .	2 6	19. Smithii album . . .	5 0
8. Flos pictum . . .	5 0	20. Spirale . . .	3 6
9. Fulgidum, crimson . . .	10 6	21. Splendidum . . .	5 0
10. Grandiflorum . . .	3 6	22. Spectabile . . .	5 0
11. Guttatum . . .	5 0	23. Tigrinum, blush-spotted . . .	10 6
12. Hyacinthiflorum, dbl. purple . . .	5 0	24. Wilsonii . . .	5 0
		25. Vittatum . . .	10 6
		26. Atro-purpureum, very dark purple . . .	5 0

The above are varieties of *R. ponticum*. Numbers 3, 8, 11, 13, 15, and 19, have cream-coloured and white flowers, beautifully and curiously spotted with brown, red, and greenish spots; No. 5 is a very early and dwarf variety, with flowers of the palest blush, changing to pure white; 10 and 15 have double flowers; 19 has curious small flowers nearly blue; No. 6 has not scarlet flowers, as its name implies—they are of a light carmine.

1. Adansonii . . .	10s. 6	4. Fragrans . . .	2s. 6
2. Azaloides . . .	1 6	5. Gowerianum . . .	3 6
3. Azaloides album . . .	7 6		

The above are hybrids of Azaleas, with Rhododendron; No. 4 is dwarf and very fragrant.

1. Cinnamomum . . .	15s. 0	6. Catawbiense hybridum . . .	1s. 6
2. Caucasicum . . .	5 0	7. Catawbiense flore-pleno . . .	5 0
3. Campanulatum . . .	7 6	8. Dauricum atrovirens . . .	1 6
4. Camp. hybridum . . .	10 6	9. Luteum . . .	42 0
5. Catawbiense . . .	1 6		

With exception of No. 1, the above are quite hardy; No. 4 is a robust-growing and very interesting hybrid; No. 9 is said to be a hybrid of Azalea pontica, with *R. caucasicum*.

AZALEAS, FINE BELGIC VARIETIES.				
1.	Pontica alba	1s. 6	17. Double White	1 6
2.	" alba flore-pleno	3 6	18. Decus hortorum	3 6
3.	" alba globosa	2 6	19. Early Pink	1 6
4.	" eximia	3 6	20. Electa	2 6
5.	" lutea rubicunda	3 6	21. Insignis	2 6
6.	" mirabilis	3 6	22. Large Orange	2 6
7.	" magnifica	3 6	23. Morterii genio	3 6
8.	" rosea	2 6	24. Maritima	2 6
9.	" spectabilis	3 6	25. Nobilissima	2 6
10.	" tricolor (Wulf)	2 6	26. Pulchella	2 6
11.	" tricolor albi-cans	2 6	27. Præstantissima	2 6
12.	Cuprea splendens	2 6	28. Princess Augusta	2 6
13.	Coccinea speciosa	3 6	29. Splendens	2 6
14.	Calendulacea	2 6	30. Speciosa	2 6
15.	" crocea	2 6	31. Venustissima	2 6
16.	" grandiflora	2 6	32. Violæ odora	2 6
			33. Vittata	1 6

Of the above Numbers, 1 to 11 are the earliest of Azaleas; Numbers 19, 25, 29, 30, and 31 follow in succession; Numbers 18, 23, 27, 28, 32, and 33 are late flowering varieties, with beautiful striped flowers.—All packages sent carriage free to London, Sawbridgeworth, Herts., Nov. 30, 1842.

used to get the deeper reds. Pinckney ignored *R. speciosum* (now *R. flammeum*).³⁰ We truly do not know the species used in the creation of the Ghent Azaleas. Additional DNA and flow cytometry analyses may yield some insight into the composition of the early Ghent Hybrids.

The blossoms on Ghent Hybrids vary in size but are generally small, from 1 to 2¼ inches (2-5.7 cm.) wide. That Van Houtte found the flowers of the North American species small in comparison to their Ghent Hybrid descendants tells us that European specimens of our species were quite limited and not of the best forms. Our swamp azalea would contribute fragrance but reduce flower size. The coastal azalea would also contribute fragrance, but it's blossoms should be somewhat larger and bloom earlier. Later hybrids with *R. molle*, both the Chinese and Japanese forms, and *R. occidentale* increased flower size. Many, but not all Ghents, are fragrant. Bloom times are typically in mid-spring, depending on the cultivar and location. Flowering occurs before or with leaf emergence. The later-flowering varieties may come from purely American parentage. They are generally tall and upright, growing 6-10 feet (1.8-3 m.) and almost as wide as they age and spread. The leaves of some turn vivid autumn colors in the fall before they drop. Ghents prefer partial to full sun, depending on the climate. Most seem to be hardy plants, withstanding temperatures to -15° F (-26° C) and even colder. The first plants were not this hardy, however. The production process involved grafting the cultivar onto the roots of the Pontic azalea. The grafted plants acquired the reputation of being short-lived and not so hardy. Those grown on their own root stock proved much hardier. With smaller flowers than later hybrids, a natural setting is a better placement.³¹

While Mortier and his fellow Belgian horticulturists were experimenting with deciduous azaleas, concurrent hybridization efforts were taking place in England, some with species and some using imported Belgian hybrids. In England in the late 1820s, James Robert Gowen, the gardener for Highclere, seat of the Earl of Carnovon, was crossing the flame azalea with the Pontic azalea and the Pontic azalea with the swamp azalea. Some of those hybrids have tested tetraploid, suggesting the cross may have been *R. luteum* with *R. atlanticum* and not with *R. viscosum*. This group was called the Ornatum Hybrids. Gowen

later crossed *R. molle* with *R. viscosum*, beginning the Viscosepalum Hybrids taken up by other breeders. Louis Verschaffelt, to whom Mortier sold the last of his stock, crossed some of Mortier's with the Ornatum Hybrids, the Pontic azalea, and other eastern North American azaleas. Louis Van Houtte found a double-flowered seedling of a Mortier hybrid in 1858 and started a new group of double Ghent Hybrids called Rustica Flore Pleno Azaleas. Van Houtte also made many crosses using the Japanese variety *R. molle* var. *japonicum*, essentially beginning the Mollis Hybrids. Around 1870, Anthony Waterer in England took the challenge of improving Ghent Azaleas by adding *R. molle* and other species, resulting in his Knap Hill Azaleas. Those from Knap Hill led to sub-groups including Exbury Hybrids by Lionel de Rothschild of Exbury, Southampton, England; Slocock Hybrids from Slocock, Bagshot, and Sunningdale Nurseries of Sunningdale, England; Windsor Hybrids developed by Sir Eric Savill at Windsor Great Park; and Ilam Hybrids by Edgar Stead, Christ Church, New Zealand.³²

Conclusion

Mortier's hybrids were a horticultural sensation. Imagine someone in the 1830s willing to pay 10,000 francs for only 10 stock plants! His new combinations of dazzling colors with fragrant flowers, apparently larger flowers, and generally later blooms that could avoid late frosts were a giant step up from the earlier varieties of the pinxterbloom, swamp azalea, and flame azalea available to the initial gardeners and plant lovers. As subsequent hybridizers rushed to the market with their Hardy Ghent Hybrids, they were now met with fresh competition from Asian evergreen azaleas and their many horticultural varieties. Deciduous varieties were best suited for informal gardens, and, as the nineteenth century progressed, formal gardens with hot-houses became the preferred style. With deciduous azaleas, excellent plantsmen such as the Waterers and Lionel de Rothschild took the attractive Ghents and worked to create varieties with larger blooms and



Azalea rustique de Gand
'Madame Alexander Hardy' (L. V. H.),
acquired from the widow of Louis Hellebuyck.
Van Houtte. 1873. *Flore des Serres* 19: 152.

even later flowering. *R. molle* and subsequently *R. occidentale* were added. The older Ghents, however colorful, were being left behind.

Almost 200 years have passed since an amateur horticulturist, a baker by trade, made a significant mark in horticultural history. Why in those two centuries did someone not report more about this important man and about his remarkable work? In all that time, wherever the history of hybridization of deciduous azaleas is mentioned, one can find only a brief note such as P. Mortier, a baker from Ghent, took *R. calendulaceum* and several other American species and crossed them with the Pontic *R. luteum*, beginning the Ghent Hybrids. Yet, thanks to the research and leads from Alfred de

Raedt and Sabine de Groote, we now know that Petrus (Pieter or Pierre) Martinus Mortier (3 Oct 1768-11 Jan 1847), husband of Isabelle Smesmans and of Maria Elisabeth Vervaeet, father of at least four sons, was that mysterious baker-florist, and, by 1833, he was in his mid-60s, no longer baking bread and pastries every morning, and was about to sell the last of his remarkable azalea seedling stock.

Unfortunately for English speakers, *De Harde Gentse* is available only in Dutch, and, further, the book is out of print. It covers (1) the species de Raedt thought were involved in the creation of the Hardy Ghents, (2) the history of the Hardy Ghents and of the Rusticas, (3) named cultivars with a brief history, (4) gardens where Hardy Ghent and Rustica cultivars can be found, (5) list of old nursery catalogs, and (6) an 8-page summary in English. This marvelous book is not simply the definitive narrative history of the Ghent Azaleas. It provides 64 pages of descriptions of many varieties, lavishly illustrated with new images and old illustrations photographed by botanist and photographer Roel Jacobs. I have (imperfectly) translated much of the text into English. It would be wonderful to have such a book available to a wider English audience of azalea lovers.

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About the Author

Charles R. Andrews III, lives in Cumming, Georgia, and is the 2023 ASA President. He has been studying North American azaleas in the field and the literature for over 40 years. Charlie writes and speaks on azalea topics and is currently writing a book on the history and characteristics of this complex group of plants.



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2023 Annual Convention Summary

By Kathy Jentz—*The Azalean*, Editor

The 2023 annual meeting of the Azalea Society of America (ASA) was held as a joint convention with the American Rhododendron Society (ARS) from April 18 to April 23 in Dunwoody, Georgia, just north of Atlanta. Approximately 130 people attended the event. A huge debt of gratitude goes to Charlie Andrews and Rick Bauer for serving as co-chairmen for the convention.

A photo collage from the event is on the back cover of this issue. Many hundreds of additional photos that I took during the meeting are posted at the ASA Facebook page, please feel free to tag yourselves and to share them.

Several attendees went on a pre-convention field trip on Wednesday to the Flint River to see the Oconee azalea (*Rhododendron flammeum*) in bloom. On that same afternoon, both societies held Board of Directors meetings. That evening, a reception featuring posters describing rhododendron and azalea research projects took place in the hotel lobby. Then, the convention plant sale opened in a tented room next to the hotel with over 3,000 plants for sale.

On Thursday morning, buses took attendees to the Atlanta Botanical Garden for a morning of immersion in the wonderful plant collections there. Then it was on to the Atlanta History Center for lunch and to explore the center's museum and gardens. Upon returning, part two of the research poster reception was followed by more plant sale shopping.

On Friday, tour buses headed to Gibbs Gardens in Ball Ground, GA. The Gibbs collection of azalea plantings has been greatly expanded recently and many attendees scaled the steep hillside paths to get shots of those in flower, as well as the extensive rhododendron collection. Next, we went on to Babyland General Hospital in Cleveland, GA. The creator of the Cabbage Patch Dolls, Xavier Roberts, was our host for a delightful buffet lunch including horsedrawn carriage rides.

The ASA banquet was held that evening and featured a presentation by Susan Treadway on her grandmother, Mary Gibson Henry. Henry was a plant explorer, native plant enthusiast, and led a fascinating life—a woman well ahead of her time.

The Saturday programs were all indoors. It rained outside as attendees listened to several seminars. The first was a panel on the *Rhododen-*

dron smokianum, a “new” North American species, by Don Hyatt, Tara Spears, and Ralf Bauer. Next was Steve McCormick, Rick Bauer, and Linda Derkach sharing chapter ideas for success. Following that, was a panel collecting ideas for future rhododendron and azalea research. Then, Rick Edwards presented, “Why Is *R. occidentale* So Difficult to Grow in the East?” and Jackson McCarter spoke on “Rhododendrons for the Southeast.” Finally, Rick Bauer gave an overview of the ASA Legacy Project. The ARS banquet was held that evening with a humorous and energetic speech by Tom Johnson.

As I was not able to attend the bonus excursion, Rich Lasonde shared his experience of the post-convention field trip:

“On Sunday April 23, nine of us and our leader, Charlie Andrews, ventured up into the north Georgia foothills and arrived at Hurricane Creek at an altitude of about 1,800 feet. There we were not only surrounded by incredible natural beauty, but we also had the privilege of witnessing azalea evolution in action. Over the years, Charlie has identified, marked, and numbered important specimens most of which tower to 15 feet or more, some to over 20 feet. *R. calendulaceum*, *R. canescens*, and *R. arborescens* are the dominant understory plants in much of the area. The *canescens* and *calendulaceum* were in bloom, the *arborescens*, confined mostly to creek banks, will bloom later. Here, some of the *arborescens* lived up to their name, large tree-like plants with enormous trunks. Because of their overlapping bloom times, *R. calendulaceum* and *R. canescens* have hybridized, which appears to have allowed *R. canescens* to mix its genes coding for the production of the red plant pigment anthocyanin with the yellow and orange pigments of *calendulaceum*. The resulting triploid progeny possess flowers with forms most resembling *calendulaceum* but in a multitude of beautiful colors of pinks and peaches, not typical of the surrounding *calendulaceum*, but with the typical flame azalea orange or gold blotch. One outstanding specimen displays a combination of cherry red and creamy white. Many natural triploids were confirmed through chromosome analysis, which added to excitement for those of us seeing these azaleas for the first time. This was truly a trip to remember.”



Azalea Society

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Welcome New Members!

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- Miriam Goodman, Killen, AL
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- Tony Marion, Cordova, TN
- Juliana Medeiros, Kirtland, OH
- Ren Oliver, Gainesville, GA
- Ceil Rock, Calera, AL
- Miranda Shetzer, Kirtland, OH
- Brandy Umbrello, Citronelle, AL
- Carmen Wisinski, Gretna, LA
- Diana Woodward, Philadelphia, PA

The Alabamese Chapter welcomes:

- Christine Litas, Opelika, AL
- Marc Johnson, Opelika, AL
- Don Richerson, Daphne, AL
- Michael Thompson, Florence, AL

The Ben Morrison Chapter welcomes:

- Kamala Codrington-White, Takoma Park, MD

The Central Carolinas Chapter welcomes:

- Brian Crisp, Fuquay Varina, NC
- Charles Holden, Fuquay Varina, NC

The Lake Michigan Chapter welcomes:

- Ronald L. Morse, Holland, MI

The Louisiana Chapter welcomes:

- Justin Knight (withheld)
- Jenny Bibb Ryals, Poplarville, MS

The Northern Virginia Chapter welcomes:

- Patricia Insley, Herndon, VA
- Alison Hutzler, Herndon, VA
- Angela Maria Lungu, Great Falls, VA

The Rev. John Drayton Chapter welcomes:

- Helen F. Deitrick, Summerville, SC
- Wilson Taylor, Charleston, SC
- Karlye Stackhouse, Charleston, SC

The Texas Chapter welcomes:

- James and Lanette Murtagh, Spring, TX
- Carol Power, Nacogdoches, TX

The Vaseyi Chapter welcomes:

- Irene Palmer, Mills River, NC

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Chapter News

Ben Morrison Chapter **Diane Reinke Secretary**

Chapter members were treated to visits to magnificent open gardens this spring. First, Rosa and Bob McWhorter in Gambrills, Maryland, held an open garden highlighting azaleas. Two weeks later, they held an open garden highlighting rhododendrons. On the same day, Carol Segree, President of the Potomac Valley Chapter of the ARS, and also a Gambrills resident, held an open garden, to feature rhododendrons. Many lovely companion plants were blooming at both gardens, such as irises, pansies, clematis, and peonies. There were good turnouts at both sites, and visitors enjoyed tasty goodies. A future open garden, featuring a spectacular collection of daylilies, is scheduled at the home of Faith Bange of Davidsonville, Maryland. Many thanks to the hosts for their generous hospitality.

The chapter mourns the passing of William Haines “Bill” Scott on April 24, 2023. Bill and his wife Gabrielle were married for 55 years. Long-time chapter members, the Scotts were very gracious hosts.



Chris Schmidt gives attendees of the Northern Virginia Chapter's March 26 meeting a presentation on Blandy Arboretum. Photo by Rick Bauer.

Northern Virginia Chapter **Rick Bauer, Corresponding Secretary**

The chapter started our year with a joint meeting with the Potomac Valley Chapter of the American Rhododendron Society (ARS). Chris Schmidt, chief arborist, gave us an interesting presentation on the history and current status of Blandy Arbo-

retum and Experimental Farm located in Boyce, Virginia. We had a great turnout, both in person and online. At the end of the presentation, Don Hyatt presented Chris with a ‘My Mary’ Beasley hybrid. We also had a plant exchange with a broad selection of beautiful azaleas and companion plants.



Northern Virginia Chapter member Don Hyatt presents speaker Chris Schmidt with a ‘My Mary’ azalea at their March 26 meeting. Photo by Rick Bauer.

Don also gave us an update on the White Garden in Fairfax County, VA. This former property of chapter member Margaret White was given to Fairfax County in 2010 for the county residents to enjoy. The county was on the verge of designating the house as a historic structure under the Resident Curatorship Program, removing the property from public use. This would have been contrary to Margaret’s wishes. Don, along with several chapter members and many other individuals, raised objections to this action. To the credit of Fairfax County officials, they listened to the public input and removed the property from the Resident Curatorship Program. The plan now is to pursue developing the property in accordance with Margaret’s wishes.

The chapter was also doing the final planning for our support of the upcoming national convention in Dunwoody, GA. We have collected a substantial number and variety of plants for the convention. Planning the logistics of moving the plants and setting up the sale has been a challenge; however we thank chapter member Paul and Carolyn Beck and Dale Berrong of the Alabamense

chapter for their efforts in preparing for the sale. We also thank Maarten van der Giessen, Mike White, Aaron Cook, Spring Meadow Nursery, Karel Bernady, and other members of the Greater Philadelphia Chapter (ARS), John Kohli, Carolyn Beck, and Dale Berrong for their contributions of plants to the sale.

Finally, spring is the highlight of our bloom season. The chapter has planned two plant sales at Meadowlark Botanical Gardens on 29 April and 6 May. We also have members opening their gardens for visits by other chapter members.

Texas Chapter

Sherrie Randall, Secretary

Texas Chapter President David Creech was a guest speaker at the Cherokee Master Gardener Spring Conference held on March 25 in Jacksonville, Texas. The Chapter hosted a booth to promote the Azalea Society as well as sell azaleas.



Texas Chapter members at the recent Cherokee Master Gardener Spring Conference: Tammy Purser, Donna Vandermolen, and new Chapter member Carol Power. Photo by Sherrie Randall.

Best Article Announced

Congratulations to the Best Article in *The Azalean* in 2022! The members voted for "The Kurume Azaleas Part 1 and 2." by Carolyn Beck and Dr. Ajit Thakur.

Azalea Society OF AMERICA

Society Officers for 2024-2026

For our next election, we will be electing society officers to serve during the term 2024-2026. The positions up for election are Society Treasurer and Secretary. Additionally, we will be electing three Directors to serve during the same period. Those interested in volunteering for one of these positions, or who would like more information, should contact the Chairman of the Nominating Committee, Rick Bauer, at rickfbauer@gmail.com. Volunteers should submit a copy of their resume no later than 30 September. These will be published in the Winter issue of *The Azalean*.

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Rooting Response of Piedmont Azalea (*Rhododendron canescens*) to Auxin Basal Quick Dip on Single Node Cuttings

By Jenny Bibb Ryals—Poplarville, Mississippi

Summary

Piedmont azalea (*Rhododendron canescens*) is a deciduous azalea native to the southeastern United States as well as areas in Maryland and Pennsylvania. Cutting propagation is used to help reduce the variability observed when propagating from seed. As a whole, deciduous azaleas are known to be difficult to root via cuttings, however, Piedmont azalea has been reported to be moderate to easy to propagate as softwood cuttings. Piedmont azalea has been observed to successfully root as softwood cuttings treated with a range of indole-3-butyric acid (IBA) from 5,000 to 10,000 ppm. The objective of this research was to determine rooting response of new growth, single node cuttings to an auxin basal quick dip in order to provide growers with relevant cutting propagation recommendations. Naturally occurring auxins are said to be produced in newly forming tissues. Therefore, it is possible adding a low dose of endogenous auxin could encourage young plants to potentially root faster and more efficiently than an older cutting. Auxin source was Hortus IBA Water Soluble Salts® (Hortus IBA) at 0, 50, 250, or 400 ppm IBA applied via five second quick dip. Data collected after 120 days included rooting percentage, total root number, and root quality (1-5, with 1=no roots and 5=healthy, vigorous root system). Results indicate that single node Piedmont azalea cuttings will root with or without the use of an auxin basal quick dip.

Introduction

Deciduous azaleas (*Rhododendron spp.*) are described by Dirr (2017) as being “among the most common woody flowering shrubs in the United States, with a myriad of shapes, sizes, and flower colors.” Although native to many areas of the world, 15 species are native to the eastern United States (Dirr and Heuser, 2018; Hyatt, 2006). Piedmont azalea, (*Rhododendron canescens* [Michx.] Sweet) is the most common native azalea in the southeastern United States. It is reported to be found in Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, Florida, Tennessee, South Carolina, North Carolina, as well as areas of Texas and



Fig. 1. Native distribution of Piedmont azalea, *Rhododendron canescens* (USDA).

Oklahoma (Figure 1 above) (Thompson, 2018; USDA, NRCS, 2020). Flowers are mildly fragrant and range from white to pink in color appearing in early spring (Figure 2 on page 43) (Dirr, 2017; Hyatt, 2006).

Propagation of native deciduous azaleas can be done by seed, cutting, and layering. Deciduous azaleas are considered to be a difficult to root plant species. Due to trait variability observed in seed-grown azaleas, cutting propagation is preferred; however, cutting propagation recommendations can vary (Hyatt, 2006; Sommerville, 1998). According to Dirr and Heuser (2018), slightly firm, 15.2 cm (6 in) cuttings should be taken from the beginning to the end of April. Dirr and Heuser (2018) also recommend using a fungicide with 4,000 ppm IBA dip; however, recommended auxin concentrations can vary with different cultivars. Hyatt (2006) recommends taking 5 to 8 cm (2 to 3 in) softwood cuttings in late May to early June while the plants are actively growing. Bir (1992) achieved successful rooting with softwood cuttings taken after the new growth had ceased and treated with 1,000-2,500 ppm IBA. Ryals et al. (2019) achieved low percentages of rooting when cuttings of new plant tissue were taken after flower senescence and treated with 2,500 ppm IBA.

Besides being difficult to root, deciduous azaleas can also be problematic to come out of dormancy and put on new growth (Brown, 2017). According to Hyatt (2006), the stronger the rooting hormone used, the more difficult it is for cuttings to break

dormancy and start actively growing. Piedmont azalea has been reported to be anywhere from moderate-to-easy to propagate as softwood cuttings, according to Galle (1987). Treatment of Piedmont azalea softwood cuttings with 10,000 ppm K-IBA resulted in successful rooting performance (Knight et al., 2005). Also, rooting with lower rates of K-IBA (7,500 ppm) occurred and an increase of rooting percentage was observed. Berry (1998) also observed rooting when new soft growth was treated with 5,000 ppm K-IBA. Auxins can be thought of as “master plant hormones” due to the fact that they influence almost every part of a plant’s growth and development (Ross et al., 2002). Translocation of auxins is thought to occur from the shoot tips down to the root tip (Goldsmith, 1977). Based on the location of naturally occurring auxins and the translocation path, it could be possible to take new, young plant tissue cuttings and utilize the naturally occurring auxin. Addition of a low dose, synthetic auxin treatment to young plant tissue cuttings could encourage the plant to possibly root faster and more efficiently than with a hardwood cutting. Thus, the objective of this study was to determine if rooting response was improved when young plant tissue, single node Piedmont azalea cuttings were treated with a basal quick dip in a range of IBA concentrations.

Materials and Methods

Piedmont azalea cuttings were taken on 3 April 2020 and 21 April 2022 from native populations at The Crosby Arboretum located in Picayune, MS (lat. 30°30’11” N, long. 89°39’53” W, elevation 17 meters USDA hardiness zone 8b). Cuttings were taken around 7:00 am after a recent rain both years to ensure they were turgid to aid in reduction of transpiration stress on the cuttings (Bir, 1996). Using the method that was described by Jenkins (2007), cuttings were taken from tissue soft enough to be removed via pinching with fingers (Figure 3 on page 44). The cuttings were single node with an average length around 1 inch long. Immediately after pinching, cuttings were placed and stored in a cooler of city water until being stuck in the respective treatments (Jenkins, 2007). At sticking, cuttings were turgid and showed no signs of wilting or stress.

Hortus (Hortus IBA Water Soluble Salts®, Phytronics, Inc.®, Earth City, MO) was mixed with city water and applied as a five second quick dip to the cuttings at four different auxin levels (0,



Fig. 2. Piedmont azalea flowers with showy soft pink color.

50, 250 or 400 ppm). The four auxin treatments were arranged in a randomized complete block experimental design with four blocks and eight cuttings per treatment per block (4 x 8 = 32 total cuttings per treatment; 32 x 4 = 128 total cuttings in study). After treatment application, cuttings were stuck in a growing mix (Jolly Gardener® Pro Line C/B Growing Mix, Old Castle Lawn & Garden, Atlanta, GA) in 2.25 in, 38 cell propagation tray inserts. The growing mix contained Canadian sphagnum peat, processed pine bark, coarse perlite, and medium vermiculite. Cuttings were then placed under intermittent mist for 6 seconds every 6 minutes during daylight hours. Sixty days after sticking, mist intervals were reduced to 2 seconds every 6 minutes. The study was terminated 120 days after sticking. In order to count and view the roots, substrate was washed off by gently spraying the roots with water. Data collected after 120 days included rooting percentage, total root number, and root quality (1-5, with 1=no roots and 5=healthy, vigorous root system). Data were analyzed using PROC GLIMMIX and Tukey’s HSD at $P \leq 0.05$ in SAS version 9.4 (SAS Institute INC., Cary, NC).

Results and Discussion

Results indicated that total root number, root quality rating, and rooting percentage were all observed to be similar among treatments within each year and across all years (Tables 1-3 on page 45).

There were no significant differences in treatment effect on root number with the average number of roots ranging from 4.3 to 3.5 across all years ($P=0.4580$), 5.8 to 4.1 in 2020 ($P=0.3184$), and 3.8 to 2.9 in 2022 ($P=0.4063$) (Table 1 on page 45). No significant treatment differences were observed in root quality ratings with the average root quality rating ranging from 3.2 to 3.8 in 2020 ($P=0.3716$), 2.7 to 3.0 in 2022 ($P=0.6988$)



Fig.3. The circled area depicts the single node, new growth that was removed via pinching with fingers.

and from 3.0 to 3.3 across all years ($P=0.6797$) (Table 2 on page 45). Rooting percentages across all years ranged from 73 to 84%, depending on treatment, with the average overall rooting percentages of 80% across all treatments ($P=0.3962$) (Table 3 on page 45). In 2020, rooting percentages ranged from 72 to 91%, depending on treatment, with average overall rooting percentages of 83% across all treatments ($P=0.2045$) (Table 3). In 2022, rooting percentages ranged from 75 to 78% with average overall rooting percentages of 77% across all treatments ($P=0.9812$) (Table 3). In other studies, Piedmont azalea rooting percentages have ranged from 75 to 100% (Knight et al., 2005; Thompson, 2018). Even though rooting percentages are very similar, previous studies used older cuttings compared to this study and required high concentrations of IBA (7,500 to 10,000 ppm) to achieve these percentages.

Propagation methods that will provide the grower with a quality liner at maximum efficiency are critical to the success of Piedmont azalea in the market. Based on the results found in this study, it would appear that new growth, single node

cuttings of Piedmont azalea can be successfully rooted without an additional exogenous auxin application. Gaining the ability to grow hard to root species without the use of exogenous auxins can benefit propagation nurseries financially and in management practices. Plant production without the use of auxin can provide a savings in input costs spent on auxins, labor costs, and reduction in plant production time. Knowing that Piedmont azalea can be propagated without the use of auxin will reduce the time it takes to stick cuttings by eliminating the hormone dipping process. Growers can also reduce the spread of disease by being able to stick cuttings directly into growing media without the possibility of contaminating them in the hormone dipping process. Also, knowing how to propagate Piedmont azalea from different cutting types gives growers the flexibility to propagate it at the most efficient time during their crop rotations.

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Table 1. Influence of auxin basal five second quick dip on number of roots of Piedmont azalea.

Treatment	2020	2022	All Years
Control	5.8 a ^z	2.9 a	4.3 a
50 ppm ^x IBA ^w	4.7 a	3.8 a	4.2 a
250 ppm IBA	4.8 a	2.9 a	3.9 a
400 ppm IBA	4.1 a	2.9 a	3.5 a
Standard Error	0.6570	0.5015	0.9351
Significance (p-value) ^y	0.3184	0.4063	0.4580

^zMeans followed by the same letter within a column are similar and not significantly different ($\alpha = 0.05$).

^yP values for differences between means were obtained using Tukey's honest significant difference (HSD) at $P \leq 0.05$.

^x1 ppm = 1mg/L

^wIBA = indole-3-butyric acid

Table 2. Influence of auxin basal five second quick dip on root quality^x of Piedmont azalea.

Treatment	2020	2022	All Years
Control	3.8 a ^z	2.7 a	3.2 a
50 ppm ^w IBA ^v	3.6 a	3.0 a	3.3 a
250 ppm IBA	3.5 a	2.7 a	3.1 a
400 ppm IBA	3.2 a	2.9 a	3.0 a
Standard Error	0.2537	0.2721	0.3729
Significance (p-value) ^y	0.3716	0.6988	0.6797

^zMeans followed by the same letter within a column are similar and not significantly different ($\alpha = 0.05$).

^yP values for differences between means were obtained using Tukey's honest significant difference (HSD) at $P \leq 0.05$.

^xRoot quality (visual rating of 0-5, with 0=dead, no callus and 5=healthy, vigorous root system).

^w1 ppm = 1mg/L

^vIBA = indole-3-butyric acid

Table 3. Influence of auxin basal five second quick dip on root percentage^x of Piedmont azalea.

Treatment	2020	2022	All Years
Control	91 a ^z	78 a	84 a
50 ppm ^w IBA ^v	88 a	78 a	83 a
250 ppm IBA	81 a	75 a	78 a
400 ppm IBA	72 a	75 a	73 a
Standard Error	0.0672	0.0814	0.0594
Significance (p-value) ^y	0.2045	0.9812	0.3962

^zMeans followed by the same letter within a column are similar and not significantly different ($\alpha = 0.05$).

^yP values for differences between means were obtained using Tukey's honest significant difference (HSD) at $P \leq 0.05$.

^xPercent rooted (visual rating of whether roots were present or not).

^w1 ppm = 1mg/L

^vIBA = indole-3-butyric acid

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About the Author:

Jenny Bibb Ryals is a Research Associate and PhD student at the Mississippi State University South Mississippi Branch Experiment Station in Poplarville, MS. She grew up in the Mississippi Delta (Indianola, MS) and has been involved in many aspects of agriculture ranging from cattle, row crop entomology, corn agronomy, to horti-

culture. Her main areas of research in horticulture revolve around finding solutions for propagation issues and various pest problems. When she is not working to solve horticulture problems she enjoys photography, hunting, and relaxing with her husband Lloyd, their son Bud, and two dogs Hondo and Hercules. She can be reached at j.ryals@msstate.edu. Coastal Research and Extension Center, Mississippi State University, South Branch Experiment Station, Hwy 26, Poplarville, MS 39470. To whom reprint requests should be addressed.

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Additional index words. Hortus IBA Water Soluble Salts®, IBA, Propagation, Single Node.



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ASA Financial Statement—December 31, 2022

By Paul A. Beck, Treasurer

INCOME STATEMENT

Year 2022

RECEIPTS

Contributions, Donations & Gifts	\$5,578
Dues (Life & Regular)	\$14,480
Seed Exchange	\$1,564
<i>The Azalean</i>	\$3,253
Interest & Dividends	\$4,278
Total Receipts	\$29,153

EXPENSES

Grants	\$8,600
Professional Fees (Editor)	\$7,200
Printing, Postage, Convention	\$11,930
Membership	\$2,367
Dropbox & Website	\$367
Credit Card Fees	\$446
Awards	\$100
Total Expenses	\$31,010

BALANCE SHEET

December 31, 2022

ASSETS

Checking	\$7,792
Savings	\$19,452
PayPal	\$3,787
CDs	\$84,824
Mutual Funds (Schwab)	\$143,409
ARF Stock Investment (Schwab)	\$18,682
Schwab Cash	\$20,157
Total Assets	\$298,103

LIABILITIES & RESERVES

Uncashed Checks	\$110
Operating Fund	\$125,262
Credit Card	\$100
Endowment Fund	\$61,320
Research Fund	\$111,311
Total Liabilities	\$298,103



LEGACY PROJECT OVERVIEW

A large number of hybridizers, including members of the Azalea Society of America, have developed beautiful hybrid varieties of azaleas. Many of these varieties have not been introduced to commercial markets and have not been widely distributed.

An overview to the Legacy Project itself, which describes the project and the suggested actions to be taken, and artifacts to be created or acquired, is available at <https://www.azaleas.org/legacy-project/> in the attachments section. Also available is a PowerPoint™ presentation on the overall Legacy Project.



All photos by Kathy Jentz, except where noted.

Clockwise from top, left:

- Charlie Andrews at Hurricane Creek by Patrick Thompson.
- Miranda Shetzer, a PhD student at the Holden Arboretum, showing her research to Jeanne Hammer.
- Rick Bauer sorting plant sale specimens and sporting his new ASA logo shirt.
- Michael Bamford gives a quick overview of the Atlanta Botanic Gardens.
- Nettie Bernady purchases more plants for her collection.
- Lunch at Babyland General Hospital.
- Rick Edwards share his rhododendron growing tips.
- Azaleas blooming at the Atlanta History Center.

See many more convention photos posted at the ASA Facebook page.

