

# The Azalea Clipper

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Northern Virginia Chapter Azalea Society of America



*Lars and Barbara March 18, 2018 photo - Fred Newlan*

## *Lars' President's Message*

With the departure of Barbara and John Kirkwood for their move to Australia, I am assuming Barbara's position as chapter president...she set the bar high for me! The Kirkwood's have been a mainstay of the chapter with their involvement in almost every activity over the past several years. She and John will really be missed and hopefully we will be welcoming them back { continued on p. 3 }

## *From Barb:*

Those members who went to the conference shared a lovely experience even though it was a chilly and wet one. If you have not attended one of the conferences in the past, you can check out the locations for the next several years on the web site to see which chapters are hosting and where.

We are now in full swing with our season.

{ continued on p. 3 }

**NEXT CHAPTER MEETING: SUNDAY JULY 15 1:00 - 4:30**

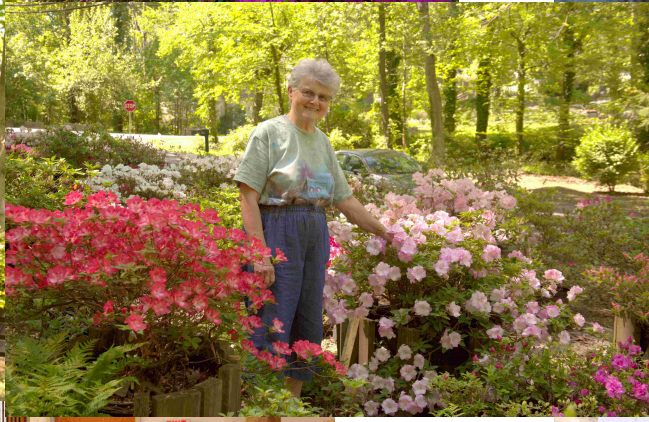
*Cutting Exchange Kirkwood Presbyterian Church*

*Plant Exchange too!* Please label cuttings and plants, and sign your name

**Refreshments: Everyone bring potluck**      **Directions on back page**

*Check Inside!*

**p. 4 Bauer's Finland**      **p. 6 Larson's Cheapskate Gardening**





to the chapter in 2 years (let's hope they don't fall in love with life down under!). We wish Barbara and John safe travels, pleasant days, and an interesting and enjoyable stay in Australia. Looking ahead we will start pulling together our calendar for 2019. If you have ideas for activities or speakers please let me or other members of the executive committee know so we can consider them in our October planning session. There are lots of good ideas out there so let us know!

We have our next chapter meeting on July 15th at Kirkwood Presbyterian Church in Springfield, VA. It is a cutting exchange so bring those special gems in your garden to share with others in the chapter! It's also a good opportunity to do a little trimming and tweaking of your azaleas while you are at it!

See you soon!

Lars

Congrats to **Fred Newlan** for signing up **eleven** new ASA members at the White's Nursery Open House in May!!



Our members have shown off their gardens, we have had a couple of sales and we are heading toward our cutting exchange in July.

Instructions on how to take cuttings are in this Clipper. This is a great event and allows us all to try our hands at propagating something new for our gardens. Do come and participate. Bring a treat to share and cuttings if you have them. If you don't have any cuttings, do not let that keep you away. Our members always bring plenty to share. I will be thinking about you during the exchange.

Unfortunately, I will already be in Canberra, Australia, suffering from the time adjustment and trying to acclimate to my new surroundings in the middle of winter. Our family will be posted there for the next 2 to 3 years. I had the opportunity to say good bye to those people who were at the spring meeting. But the best made plans sometimes fail us. I anticipated saying farewell at our Green Springs plant sale, but alas, that was rained out.

There are a lot of things I will miss, but one of my greatest regrets is leaving my friends in the Azalea Society. I have enjoyed serving as Vice President and President and I know I am leaving you in the capable hands of our other officers. I am so grateful for the many knowledgeable people who have helped me fumble my way through as I learned about the beauty of, propagating, and raising azaleas. Thank you all for your help and the precious gifts of friendship.

Barb

**Captions:** photos by *Sperling* (S), *Newlan* (N) – p. 1 (N), p. 2 Susan Barbara (N), Fred Paul Carolyn (unk), Lars (S), Paul Susan Rick Dan at Convention (Joanne Neckel), Bob Stewart (S), Carolyn at Bob's (S), Group (N), Ajit (S), p. 3 Paul Dave Dan John Barb Leslie Joanne Carolyn at goodbye dinner (unk), p. 4 - (all by Bauer) Leslie Madeline & Ken Webb, Susan, Hale Booth, Dave in Korpoo; Haaga Rhododendron Park, Helsinki; Sapokka Water Garden, p. 5 Fuksinpuista Park in Kotka; Kristian Theqvist's Garden in Korpoo, p. 6 Lars Larson's photo of his grandson, p. 7 Barbara Bullock lecture (N), Senora Simpson (N), Meeting (N), Dan Budne Barb (N), Sperling Garden (2, S), Thakur Garden Wakebisu (S), Neckel Garden Fox and Kit (Neckel)

## *ARS Convention - Finnish Post Tour*

by **Rick Bauer**

A large number of Azalea Society of America (ASA) members, many from the Northern Virginia Chapter, attended the one week American Rhododendron Society convention in Bremen, Germany 20-27 May. Those attending the convention also had the opportunity to participate in pre-tours in Germany, Netherlands, Denmark and Sweden and a post tour in Finland.



Susan and I, along with other Northern Virginia Chapter members, Dave and Leslie Nanney and Laura Grant and Robert Ramik continued on to Finland after the convention. The entire party of 45, led by Kristian Theqvist and Peter Tigerstedt flew to Helsinki from Hamburg on the 20th.

Monday was the start of our three day visit to public and private gardens. Our first stop was the Haaga Rhododendron Park in Helsinki. It was founded in 1975 as a research garden for the University of Helsinki's plant breeding program. The park was extended in 1996 to include deciduous azaleas. The research is now

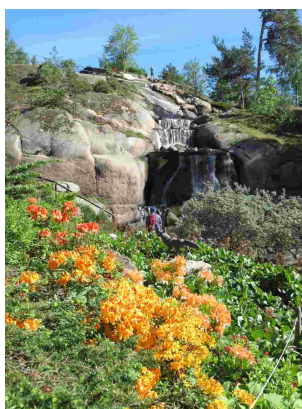
complete and the garden serves as a public park.

Afterwards we went to Porvoo, a small town on the banks of the Porvoo River. The town's old section has been preserved, much like a Finnish Williamsburg, without the docents.

Following coffee break, we headed off to Arboretum Mustila. It was founded in 1902 as a test bed for conifer species by Peter Tigerstedt's grandfather. It is also home to a large number of azaleas and rhododendron.

Our final visit for the day was to the Sapokka Water Garden and the Fuksinpuisto Park in the town of Kotka. The former had a nice collection of azaleas as well as an impressive waterfall fed from the sea through a pipe. The water flows to the bay below via a 20 meter tall waterfall. The garden includes Finnish rhododendron cultivars and azalea hybrids developed through the hybridization program of the University of Helsinki.

On Tuesday we had another early start to the day. Our first stop was in the town of Salo where we visited the private arboretum belonging to Ari Laakso. He has an unbelievable arboretum which he built and maintains by himself. It consists of woodlands, stone outcropping, a lake and a number of plants including conifers, rhododendron and azaleas.



Our last garden visit that day was to the private Arboretum Apaskeri of Osmo Jussila, the founder of the Finnish Rhododendron society. Osmo had an extensive garden at his home when he gained a partnership in the property in 2003 and built a weekend home. He moved plants from his crowded garden at his home to this new, private, arboretum.

After the visit we headed to our hotel along the river in Turku.

Wednesday was the last day of touring. The highlight was a visit to Kristian Theqvists private garden in Korppoo, a town in the Turku archipelago. This is a series of islands connected by ferries. The ride to Kristian's weekend home required two ferries. On the way we had the chance to visit the Korpo stone church which was built in the 15th century. We then headed to Kristian's garden. Our bus driver was excellent and got us as close to the garden as possible, however we ended up walking the last kilometer. This was the first time Kristian had opened his garden to the public. Even Peter Tigerstedt had never been there before. The garden was well laid out with wooden sidewalks, staircases and pavilions on top of the ridge. Kristian has a large number of rhododendron varieties and all of the Northern Lights azalea varieties. These azaleas were developed by the University of Minnesota and are designed to thrive in colder climates.

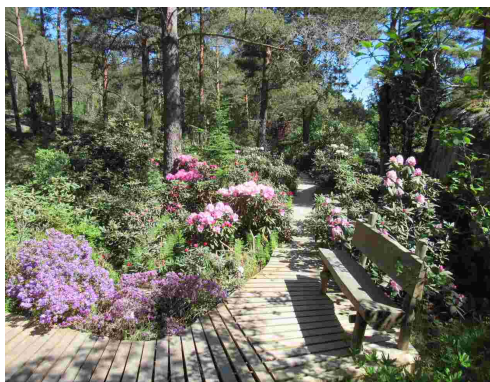
We arrived at our hotel, situated in the center of Helsinki, in the early evening. We had our last dinner in the hotel that evening. Ken Webb, Vice President of the ARS gave our thanks to Kristian and Peter, presented them each with a small banner representing the collaboration of those members in the USA and in Europe. Finally we provided them each a small gift to be used to purchase a rhododendron for their gardens as our way of thanking them for all of their efforts in making the tour so memorable. Afterwards we said goodbye to old friends and new ones we had made at the Bremen convention and the pre and post tours.

Susan and I stayed one additional day to explore the city. It turned out that the botanical garden was in a park behind the hotel. We used the opportunity to view one more collection of rhododendron and azaleas prior to leaving Finland. The garden had a number of Northern Lights varieties including Rosy Lights, Northern Hi-lights and White Lights. It also had a collection of Luteum and Japonicum. The rhododendron collection included Catawbiense and Ponticum as well as hybrids produced by Finnish hybridizers.

The Finland post tour was a once in a lifetime event. Many of the gardens visited were private and not normally open to the public. The hospitality shown by our Finnish hosts and the garden owners was unsurpassed and will not be forgotten.

This was just a quick highlight of the post tour. A much more extensive article on the Finnish post-tour gardens is in the Spring 2017 Journal of the American Rhododendron Society <http://ars2018.org/JARS/ARS2018Finland-JARS2017SPRING.pdf>.

[Your editor deleted much of the ambiance of the tour for space reasons. Check the URL above!]





## *The Cheapskate Gardner*

by **Lars Larson**

One of the benefits of having certain birds in the garden is their appetite for bugs and insects that may be harmful to our treasured plants. A great project is to use some of the wood scraps laying around to build bird houses for these helpful birds of flight. Fortunately the birds don't seem to care if it is of leftover wood, less than professional results, and a bit ad hoc! They seem to appreciate the effort to provide affordable and satisfactory housing! Not only do you have an opportunity to get rid of wood laying around, it's a great project in which kids can participate.

“Raw” unpainted wood without treated preservatives is best to prevent any toxins from harming the birds and their young. There are all sorts of designs available and some are more suited for particular bird species than others. “Cavity nesters” like blue birds, swallows, woodpeckers and others are in this category and are big insect eaters. Box designs that provide roughly 5”w x 5”d x 6”h interior space will accommodate most birds of this category. The entrance hole (1 ¼” or so) should be in the upper third of the east facing side. A perch is not needed for these birds but can be added below the hole if desired. A roof that protrudes an inch or two over the entrance provides some shade and rain protection for the entrance. The roof should have a slight (1/2”) overhang on the sides. To maintain a reasonable interior temperature cut the side panels about a quarter inch short to allow venting at the top of the box. Four of or five ¼” holes can be drilled

in the floor of the box to provide drainage should rain get in the box. One side can be hinged with 2 nails at the top to allow cleaning out of the box after the birds have vacated the nest. A bent nail inserted from the side at the bottom of the side panel serves as a “lock” to secure the side panel.

Once the box is completed a site needs to be selected, 5' to 6' off the ground. Blue birds and



swallows prefer more open areas and fence lines. Although a tree trunk could be used, it makes the box more vulnerable to snake and animal attack. A better solution is to mount the box on a pole or

metal pipe. To discourage snakes and any climbing animals from getting to the box, 18" of dryer vent pipe can be mounted below the box with the top end capped (both items can be found in Home Depot or Lowes). A nail through the mounting pipe suspends the vent pipe on the pole and allows movement to make any attempt at climbing difficult and the cap at the top stops any snake from exiting the top of the dryer vent pipe and reaching the box! Once set up, it takes only a couple days for the birds to check it out and start nesting...and with luck you may have several broods of new insect eaters added to your garden or yard!





## [Directions to Kirkwood Presbyterian Church](#)

8336 Carrleigh Parkway, Springfield, VA 22152, 703-451-5320 [Kirkwood.office@verizon.net](mailto:Kirkwood.office@verizon.net)

**From the East:** Rte 95 exit 169B, Franconia Rd West, which becomes Old Keene Mill Rd (Rte 644) about 3 miles, passing Irving Middle School, to a Right at a light on Carrleigh Parkway  
Make a U-turn at Dabney Avenue

**From the West:** Fairfax County Parkway (Rte 286)

East on Old Keene Mill Rd (Rte 644) about 3.5 miles, passing Rolling Road  
to Left at a light on Carrleigh Parkway ; Make a U-turn at Dabney Avenue

## *Taking Cuttings*

Select cuttings from **new growth found at the terminal branch ends** (avoid branches that have produced "sport" blossoms uncharacteristic of the named variety). Collect cuttings **after the stems are fully mature**, but before they turn woody. The parent plants must be in good health. A good time to take the cuttings is in the **early morning**. If drought conditions are present, **water the plants well the evening before**. Select stems of medium diameter rather than thin weak wood. Place cuttings (4 to 6) from each plant in a separate plastic bag (identified by the parent variety) along with a few drops of water, and seal it to retain 100% humidity inside. Print the name of the plant variety on the outside of the bag, along with a short description of the plant. **Avoid overheating of cuttings from direct sunlight**. Cuttings should be stuck in the rooting medium as soon as possible after taking the cuttings, but they can be stored in a closed container in the refrigerator for up to a week. {At the meeting ask our experts about growing cuttings!}

A good **label** with the plant name, hybridizer, flower description and "cutter" would help a lot!

Find your editor's Essay Blog at

<http://thegardenedge.blogspot.com>

A new one posted about the 20<sup>th</sup> of each month.

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The Clipper*

## *Schedule*

7/15 Cutting Exchange Kirkwood Pres. Church

9/29 Auction/Sale Kirkwood Pres. Church

10/28 Fall Meeting Kirkwood Pres. Church

TBD Executive Committee. Meeting

12/9 Holiday Social

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