

# The Azalea Clipper

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Northern Virginia Chapter Azalea Society of America



## **NEXT CHAPTER MEETING:**

**SUNDAY APRIL 9  
1:30 - 4:30**

## ***DIRT!***

Kirkwood Presbyterian Church

directions on the last page

Refreshments:

**L - Z**



*Shade loving plants fight greedily to get their roots into this.*

## ***What could be more interesting than dirt?***

**Barry Sperling** thinks the subject of soils is as good as it gets and will try to convince you of that truth. Covering the makeup of soils and their mineral constituents he will discuss the major items and how plants use each one.

*With that knowledge you will see how to mix ingredients to provide all that will make the plants happy to be in your yard, which minerals should be added regularly and which will create poisonous salts if used too often.*

**PowerPoint** views and handouts will clarify the situation so that everyone will have gardens they will want to place on spring tour lists.

For all your azalea info: **Club** and more – [www.nv-asa.org](http://www.nv-asa.org)

**National** – [www.azaleas.org](http://www.azaleas.org)



## *President's Message*

Facebook very generously reminded me of what March looked like in 2016 with 3' of snow. No wonder we, along with the plants and trees are very confused. Our cherry tree had a bunch of blooms and our Magnolia had lots of buds and had just begun to flower out. Then we had a little dusting of snow that looked lovely, but the 20 degree temperatures for three nights in a row turned the almost blooms into dried up has-beens. Other trees looked like they survived to enjoy the warmed up weather of the next week, but ours did not.

So I guess we will wait until next spring for another chance at magnolias and instead hope for a good show on Azaleas.

On March 18 we had our first Mini Garden Symposium. Since this note must go to the editor before the 18<sup>th</sup> we will not have a report on the event until the next edition. For the first time that I know of, we were working jointly with five different gardening organizations: the American Rhododendron Society, Green Springs Master Gardeners, American Hemerocallis Society, Potomac Hosta Club, and Meadowlark Gardens to provide nine different topics and two children's programs.

We now launch into our busy season.

On March 26, 1- 4 PM we have been invited to the Potomac Valley Chapter of the ARS to hear Barbara Bullock give an update on the Azalea Collection at the National Arboretum.

Some of our members will then be off to the ASA convention in Hammond, Louisiana from March 30 to April 2. I am eager for some consistent warm weather, sunshine, and lots of blooms.

We have our spring meeting on Sunday April 9 from 1:30 to 4:30 PM at Kirkwood Presbyterian. Snacks and goodies can be provided by members with last names beginning L-Z.

The American Rhododendron Society holds their convention April 27-30 in Eureka, California.

White's Nursery will hold two open houses, April 29<sup>th</sup> and May 21<sup>st</sup>, to show off earlier and later blooming plants.

Unless we find we need a date change with our crazy weather, we tentatively have will have member garden tours scheduled jointly with Potomac Valley ARS on May 6 in Maryland and May 7 in Virginia.

Carolyn and Paul will be representing our organization at the Parkfairfax Condominium sale.

Rounding out our whirlwind of activity will be the Green Springs Garden Sale on May 20.

Then we have a brief respite until our July cutting exchange.

Spring is on the way, and the early blossoms are allowing us some early enjoyment.

Thanks, as always, to Barry Sperling for his wonderful Clippers and Not the Clippers. Please remember to send him pictures of your gardens and consider writing something for a future edition.

Barb

p. 2 Captions: Left to Right, Top to Bottom Paul Davis, Joe Gutierrez, Carolyn Beck, Diane Marcus, Larry Martin, Susan Bauer, Dave Nanney, Rick Bauer, Beverly Singer, Irene Aslan, Dave Meadows, Pati Gabaldoni, Joe, Klimavicz Sam Burd, Dan Neckels, Joanne Neckels, Budne Reinke, Diane Reinke, Don Hyatt, Carolyn Beck, Dick Cecka

***Fashion***  
by *Barry Sperling*

I couldn't imagine working in the garden without the latest fashion apparel. Perusing the catalogs of gardening supplies gives me the updates on Giorgio Armani's thinking that I need to appear at my best.

... OK, if reading the opening paragraph didn't make you believe that you had entered an alternate universe then you haven't read anything else I've written.

In *this* universe the first consideration is that I not get arrested due to my attire. The second is that I not get eaten by bugs. The third is that I'm not too hot or cold. And the fourth is ... uh ... I don't know. I guess I don't give much consideration to my attire after all.

For the first, above, most of my body is usually covered due to the second and third considerations. My wife does get upset if she notices that my underpants start to ride high as my sweat-soaked long pants drift in accordance with gravity. But that's pretty rare (her noticing, that is).

The second, keeping the bugs from getting fat on me, involves several things:

a) insect repellent, which I spray on liberally

b) long white pants and a white long-sleeved shirt which makes it easier to see ticks attaching themselves. Also the clothes reflect less long-waved radiation so visibility to mosquitoes drops.

c) a dense hat. Someone took away the hair on top of my head and I haven't been able to find it (my hair, that is, not my head).

On a side note, the only person to comment on my white-out appearance was a young girl who lives across the street. I gave her the answer in b) above and she seemed satisfied, though maybe anything I said would have ended the questioning.

As for the third point, maintaining a blissful temperature: I rarely succeed at that. During the summer my bug-armor keeps me dripping but luckily I don't care. I clean up when I'm finished. Also, I'm rich enough to afford a washer/dryer and a shower. The winter is another story as gloves that keep me warm are usually too thick to work with, so sometimes the sessions have to be cut short when I can't feel my hands.

There are some days in the spring and fall, though, when I don't need a long-sleeved shirt, or sweatshirt, or coat, or deep-sea diver's suit. Just an undershirt showing its age. When a new family moved in next door a few years ago they would look askance at this poorly dressed, sweat-soaked laborer digging holes, mixing dirt and hauling his wheelbarrow back and forth. My wife and I had considered putting up a fence along that property line but the sight of me convinced that family to put one up themselves. Now their backyard parties would not be ruined by the unpleasant sights nearby. So, what has my fashion done for me? It's saved me thousands of dollars in fence costs! Take *that* Giorgio Armani!

If you didn't like the essay above, you won't like the other essays, which I post to my blog once a month on about the 20<sup>th</sup>. Find them all at:

<http://thegardenedge.blogspot.com>

Did you know that **ALL** of the **Azaleans** and many of the **Clippers** are available online at our website: <http://www.nv-asa.org>? Thanks to the team of **Susan** and **Rick Bauer**, **Paul Beck** and **Dave Banks**. Dave found addresses for the authors, Susan worked on the proposal to the BOD, researched copyright agreement requirements and pursued copyright releases, and then the pages were scanned in by Rick and Paul.

My Computer must have been hacked as I don't remember putting the below into the Clipper; it just appeared! That sneaky California Rose ...

## ***Cherry Blossoms***

*by California Rose*

Before we had a chance to meet them up close, the Cherry Blossoms were a mystical beauty to be admired from the evening national news at the appropriate time in spring. It seems like everyone has heard about the Cherry Blossoms of Washington D.C., and how could one not be taken aback by the breath taking views of so many trees along with famous views of Washington monuments.

It seems everyone knew about the buoyant flower that went beyond a Washington event into a global phenomenon of flutter petals. A friend who had been lucky to have communed with them in their natural habitat in Japan for a few years told me about the cherry blossom festivals, raving about, the picnics, the poetry writing, and the contemplation of their beauty. Friend told me that, like everything else in Japan where following the rules is a national obsession, there is a right way to honor cherry blossoms. You gather with friends, picnic in tow, spread a blanket under the trees and write traditional Japanese Haiku. Since this is the right way, then clearly there is a wrong way. Surprisingly I found it. More on that below.

When we arrived in the Washington, DC area, we were overeager to see these blooms in person. In January— yes, January—I noticed some Potomac River cruises to allow you to see the blossoms at a leisurely pace. So I picked out a date right in the middle of the projected peak blossom week and got those tickets before anyone else could. As the weather is wont to do in the greater WDC area, spring hadn't really gotten the word that it was April and the cold lingered. Locked into the date, we made our way into the District convinced against all reasonable odds we might see a tree or two

laden with blossoms. A few brave souls shivered outside in the wind. We huddled inside the ship longingly peering out the windows. And discussing how this would have been quite a pleasant trip if the temperatures had been above freezing. We did indeed see blossoms, all four of them that had made an early foray onto one of the trees. Needless to say, this first effort was not quite the experience I had been anticipating. Naturally we would do better next time.

When the blossoms did show up, we did decide to venture out to the Jefferson Memorial to participate in the viewing, poetry writing, and contemplation. Instead we sat in traffic miles away from the park. When we remarkably found a parking spot a mere 20-minute walk to the Tidal Basin, we found that everyone within a hundred miles of Washington had a similarly great idea. There was barely space to shuffle along let alone spread blankets and posteriors.

But there were indeed blossoms and hundreds of trees. It was undeniably a glorious sight and something to see in person. However, I think it may fit into the same category as the Japanese saying, “A wise man climbs Mount Fuji ONCE, a fool climbs twice.” I may pass up the chance to inch along the Tidal Basin and perhaps just spread my blanket under a tree I found right in my neighbor's yard.

I was absolutely astonished when we had spring weather arrive this past December, specifically at Christmas time. I drug out my camera to take a picture of that neighborhood cherry tree that had broken out in more blooms than we saw on that cruise last year. I spread out my blanket and wrote my Haiku:

It means what for spring?

Blossoms? Recovery? Please?

Questions. No answers.

## 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

## *Schedule*

**March 30 - April 2:** ASA Convention, Hammond Louisiana

**April 9** Chapter Meeting with Speaker at Kirkwood Presbyterian Church; Snacks: L-Z  
1:30 – 4:30 pm

**April 27-30:** ARS Convention, Eureka, CA

**May 6:** Parkfairfax Condominiums Plant Sale, Alexandria

**May 6-7 (tentative):** Member Garden Tours

**May 20:** Green Spring Garden Plant Sale

**July 16:** Cutting Exchange at Kirkwood

Presbyterian Church, 1 – 4 pm

**September 9:** Green Spring Gardens Fall Plant Sale (Tentative)

**September 15-16:** Ginter Gardens Fall Plant Sale (Tentative)

**September 23:** Public plant sale and auction at Kirkwood Presbyterian Church, 1 – 4 pm

**October 14:** Executive Committee meeting, 10 am – 1:30, place TBD

**October 15:** Meeting with speaker at Kirkwood Presbyterian Church, 1 – 4 pm

**December 3:** Holiday Social, 1 – 4 pm, place TBD



Clockwise: Paul Beck, Lars Larson, Barbara Kirkwood, Rick Bauer

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