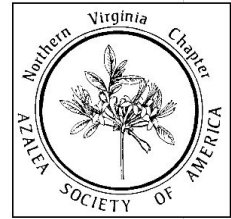


The Azalea Clipper

Volume 35 Issue 5 December 2014 Published 1980-2010 by Frances and Phil Louer
Northern Virginia Chapter Azalea Society of America



**NEXT
CHAPTER MEETING:**

**SUNDAY DECEMBER 7
1:00 - 5:00**

HOLIDAY SOCIAL

Kirkwood Residence

Everyone please bring a dish to share

*Meeting Agenda:
2014 – 15 Budgets
Election of officers
Donation plans*

Directions On P. 11



Carolyn Beck has written a great account of her June trip to the Smoky Mountains with Paul and a trio of plant-hunting experts. Get the details, starting on p. 5!

Carolyn's photos:

above - Linville Falls

left - Calendulaceum 'Big Bird'



President's Message

Our October meeting at the Wildfire Restaurant was an enjoyable event with a presentation by **Harold Greer** and an opportunity to meet the members of several American Rhododendron Society chapters who co-sponsored the meeting. With the holidays quickly approaching and winter at the door, our gardens are entering the dormant stage and it's time to enjoy the last leaf show of our trees and plantings. It's a great time to survey the garden and look at the change in color of our azaleas and judge the potential for spring blooms. Don't forget to take the opportunity to protect against the 4 legged grazers if they frequent your landscape!

To get the December holiday season off to a great start, we will be gathering at **Barbara and John Kirkwood's** on December 7th. In addition to welcoming in the season, we'll be holding our annual business meeting where we will be reviewing the year, looking ahead to 2015 and electing our chapter officers. I encourage all to attend and participate in this always enjoyable event to close out our very good year. For those unable to attend, have a safe and enjoyable holiday season.

Hope to see you there,
Lars

Carolyn notes that our chapter was mentioned in the **Green Spring** newsletter, called '**Gardenline**'. Their manager, **Mary Olien**, says in her message 'Interns and Internships Are Valuable', "Less than 4 miles from Green Spring Gardens is a shady enclave of rhododendrons, azaleas, and camelias known as the **White Gardens**. With generous support from the **Azalea Society of America, Northern Virginia Chapter**, the White Gardens intern, **Ashlan Smith**, filled our newest intern position."

Webmaster/Treasurer **Paul Beck** reminds us that **DUES ARE DUE** and that you may go to

<http://www.nv-asa.org>

to read about payment options. Also, after logging in, the club's **FINANCIAL STATUS** (with budgets) is available from the "Financials" link near the bottom of the left menu.

Secretary **Susan Bauer** also points out that the minutes of the last Executive Board Meeting are on the website, available from the "Minutes" link in the middle of the left menu.

Dave Nanney requested that we reprint the link to pictures of the old azalea club meetings (from 2001) so we can see how we were:

<http://picasaweb.google.com/bsperlin/AzaleaMeetings2001#>

Do YOU have pictures of club members from a by-gone era? Let the editor know!

Captions p. 2 Arborescens near Wayah Tower, Calendulaceum 'Molten Lava' : photos – Carolyn Beck
Banquet Oct. 11: middle: Don Voss, Jane Newman, Norman Beaudry
bottom left: Larry Martin, Susan Bauer, Lars Larson, Rick Bauer
bottom right: speaker Harold Greer: Banquet photos - Sperling

NV-ASA Recent Web Site Changes

Our chapter web site is in a constant state of upgrade and change. In addition to the recent addition of the full ASA membership listing, we have added the ability to renew your membership on-line using PayPal with either your PayPal account or a credit/debit card. This feature is available for both associate and regular members.

Regular and Associate Membership Renewals

Your ASA membership needs to be renewed by the end of the year, unless you have a lifetime membership, or you have previously renewed for more than one year. This year, for the first time, we are accepting membership renewals online via our web site. Complete details and instructions are published on the nv-asa.org home page. Payment may be made by credit card, debit card, or PayPal account. This requires you to login to view your profile and renew your membership. If you have not already created a login, please Register on the web site.

For regular members, if your membership expires in 2014, there will be a **Renew Membership** button near the bottom of your Profile page, right after the **Year Expires** line. For associate members, the button is near the top of the form, just under the Associate Chapter line. Associate members need to renew their full ASA membership through their host chapter or on the ASA web site.

Please consider renewing your membership for a level above **Regular**. There are three categories of membership above the Regular that help support the operation of the ASA, **Contributing, Supporting and Endowment**. Each has a different renewal amount, and the portion above the Regular membership is fully tax deductible.

As always, you may renew by check mailed to **Paul Beck, 2963 Fort Lee Street, Oak Hill, VA 20171-1812**. Regular dues are \$30 per year, and there are discounts for paying for multiple years (see the web site for details). You may also pay your dues at the holiday party, using cash, credit card or a check.

NV-ASA Planned Web Site Changes

The following is a list of the planned changes to our web site over the next 6-9 months. If there are any web site enhancements you think worthwhile, please contact our webmaster, **Paul Beck**. Contact information is available on the web site at the [Contact Us](#) link.

³⁵₁₇ Credit Card/PayPal acceptance for new membership. The Join Us link will take the new member to a page where they can fill out all their membership information, and then with the click of a button they will be able to pay for the membership using either a credit card or PayPal account. Their membership data will then be immediately available to all who have access. All of the financial aspects will be handled by PayPal so that our web site does not maintain any credit card information. In this way, the liability for credit card fraud is on PayPal, not the Northern Virginia chapter.

³⁵₁₇ Conventions page. We plan to add a page containing past and future conventions for the ASA and ARS, with links to the appropriate web sites. This will help with planning your travel and other activities so that you are able to attend these important (and fun) activities.

³⁵₁₇ Azalean archives. We are considering putting up an electronic archive of the past Azalean magazines. This will be a big job, considering the amount of effort required to scan in all the past articles. The old Azaleans are a treasure chest of information, so I think this will be a worthwhile effort. This also may be accomplished at the national level rather than on our chapter web site.

³⁵₁₇ Expanded nursery list. A more comprehensive listing of good nurseries for plant acquisitions would be a good addition to the web site. If you have any suggestions for inclusion in this list, please let **Paul Beck** know.

Mountains of Native Azaleas

by Carolyn Beck

Wow! What a spectacular journey. This was a first experience for **Paul** and me, joining the annual trek through the mountains of Tennessee and North Carolina, enjoying the pleasures of seeing deciduous azaleas in bloom. We were led by three veteran guides, **George McLellan** (left in picture), **Don Hyatt** (next) and **Karel Bernady** (far right). They have been making these pilgrimages for decades.



We departed Virginia on Tuesday, June 17th. On Wednesday morning we arrived at **Appalachian Native Plants (ANP)**, located in Mountain City, TN, and owned by J Jackson and Lindy Johnson. First was a tour through their nursery: a greenhouse packed full of thousands of seedlings, and hoop houses filled with liners and quart size plants. After much contemplation, I selected a number of flats of wonderful azaleas, like *R. vaseyi* (Pinkshell Azalea), *R. periclymenoides* (Piedmont Azalea or Pinxter Bloom), *R. calendulaceum* (Flame Azalea) and some Zo Warner natural hybrids descendents of the Gregory Bald azaleas.

One of the goals of ANP is to preserve native ornamentals, predominantly from the Southern Appalachians. To that end, they have searched for plants, documented pertinent information and mapped GPS coordinates for many notable specimens and populations. After collecting seed and growing these into sizeable plants, they proceeded to select superior forms to use as stock plants in their display garden. The seed from these specimens is used to grow transplants (plugs/liners) and quart size plants that are available to both the trade and to individuals. In this way, ANP has become a premiere source for 10 of our 15 native azaleas. One can purchase items at the nursery by appointment, or ordering by mail.

After our time at ANP, we drove a half hour to J and Lindy's home, where we walked through their gardens. What a treat. Seeing mature plants gave me an appreciation of the beauty of the blooms, an up close view of the leaves, as well as the structure and size of the plants. This information will be helpful when it comes to planting our new acquisitions.

Our first wild plant excursion, on Thursday morning, was to **Roan Mountain**, a part of the Pisgah and Cherokee National Forests. This actually is not a single mountain, but a high ridge series of peak and gaps that extends over 5 miles, and boasts the longest stretch of grassy balds in the Appalachian Mountains, with panoramic views most of the way.

The elevation changes were fairly gradual, from 5,500' to 6,286'. To the west were Roan High Bluff and Roan High Knob. But we wanted to go east where the *calendulaceum* are more abundant.

This is considered one of the finest and most diverse stands anywhere in the world. This section is usually a sea of vibrant color during mid June, but this year peak flowering was passed due to our cooler than normal spring, followed by a very warm spell which compressed the bloom time. Fortunately for us, the later blooming forms were impressively showy – brilliant yellows and oranges, in many shades and combinations.



Calendulaceum 'Filly Jane'

Breathe the clean air.

The morning air was very crisp and windy, necessitating multiple layers. The well-defined path we took from the parking lot at Carter's Gap brought us onto a part of the Appalachian Trail. We went through a short section of woods (Fraser Fir, Red Spruce), then entered a long stretch that is almost completely treeless. We traveled across Round Bald, Engine Gap, Jane Bald to Jane Gap. Soon after we entered the open area, Karel took out his bird-watching binoculars and spied a cluster



Calendulaceum on Roan Mountain

of *calendulaceum* in a fairly remote area to the southwest that had not been noticed on previous trips. So he and George took off to explore the pathless route, record the cluster with notes and photos, as well as GPS map their new finds.

Don accompanied us to the east. Along the way, he pointed out some of the special forms that have been given informal names: 'Molten Lava' with its ruffled golden-orange flowers, 'Frilly Jane', in shades of apricot and golden-yellow, and 'Roan Buttercup', a compact, semi-dwarf yellow variety. At the end of an hour we reached 'Big Bird' (one of my favorites), a clear yellow, with the top frilled petal overlaid with gold. Fortunately, it had waited a little later than many of the other to bloom. Ahead of us was Grassy Ridge, an area that is usually covered with the pinkish-purple flowers of *R. catawbiense* (Catawba Rhododendron). Although they are typically in full bloom during the middle of June, this year they had entirely gone by, so we decided to head back. Hopefully, we will be able to return to see this magnificent display.

Along the way back, we stopped to rest and have lunch on a rocky outcropping that has a spectacular view of the area to the south. By now it was toasty warm, and layers were shed. Don relayed some of the history of this mountain range, including the fact that what we were sitting on was over a billion years old.

This piece of the Appalachian Trail was a moderate climb, although the walking sticks that Don Hyatt lent us came in handy. The **Appalachian National Scenic Trail (AT)** extends over 2,200 miles, following the ridgeline of the Appalachian Mountains from Springer Mountain in Georgia to Mount Katahdin in Maine. Thousands of species of plants and animals make their home here, including 2000 that are considered rare, threatened, or endangered. The AT is maintained by a variety of citizen organizations, environmental advocacy groups, government agencies, and individuals, all coordinated by the Appalachian Trail Conservancy. We are grateful for all the resources that have gone into making this fantastic hiking trail.



Kalmia on Wine Springs

For dinner we gathered at **Suba's Restaurant**. They offer such an extensive selection of excellent cuisine, with their mouthwatering desserts as a specialty made by our gracious host! Suba's is a true dining experience, and definitely a requirement whenever you are near the Mountain City region.

Day three started off along the **Blue Ridge Parkway** on our way to Franklin, NC. We accessed the parkway near Blowing Rock, going south. Shortly after, about milepost 294, we stopped at the Moses H. Cone Memorial Park, and spent some time in their gift shop. What a delight; a tempting array of finely handcrafted items of ceramic, wood, glass, fabric, and more, all attractively displayed. We were looking for a thank you gift for a special couple, and this was a perfect place to make a selection. Then back to the parkway.

Don pointed out places from milepost 410 to 425, where *vaseyi* can be found in shades of pink from pale to very dark. Paul and I want to make a trip to this area in early to mid May of another year to see them showing off. I would really like to find one of the darkest pink varieties to photo.

Vaseyi has a very limited natural range, restricted to a few mountainous regions in North Carolina. Nevertheless, it will do well at lower elevations.

The Blue Ridge Parkway is a scenic highway, linking two eastern national parks: the Shenandoah and The Great Smoky Mountains. It has some of the highest mountains in Virginia and North Carolina, with elevation changes from 649' to 6,047'. It has so much to offer vacationers: hiking, falls, overlooks with wonderful views, art, music, camping, and, of course a treasure trove of plant materials. But we were on a mission, and other temptations had to wait.

At milepost 316 we made a little detour to **Linville Falls**. An easy trail took us downhill to where we could see it to good advantage. Along the way, we passed a patch of *Galax urceolata* (Wandflower), a delightful wildflower. There were tons of *R. maximum* (Rosebay Rhododendron), but none in bloom.

At milepost 355 we turned into **Mount Mitchell State Park**, the highest point in the eastern U.S at 6,684'. The cloud cover prevented a good view, but we had enough light to take photos of some Purple Fringed Orchids (*Platanthera grandiflora*), with their spikes of pinkish-purple and white blooms.

Wayah Bald is located in the Nantahala National Forest near Franklin, NC, and is on the AT. On our drive to the top of Wayah the next morning, we stopped to walk a side path to check out an unusual form of *calendulaceum* – a 2" hose-in-hose apricot with a broad gold blotch. We drove to the summit, an elevation 5,342', to park, and then wandered around the periphery through a patch of *R. arborescens* (Sweet or Smooth Azalea).

Walking down the road a little distance, we took a paved path to the Old Stone Fire Tower. On a clear day, such as the one we were enjoying, this offers a view of the Great Smokey Mountains in Tennessee, and south into the rolling hills of Georgia. In the surrounding area, there is an impressive display of *arborescens*: white flowers, tinged pink with pink stamens. The fragrance wafting through the air was intoxicating.

On **Wine Springs Bald** there are a myriad of different *Kalmia latifolia* (Mountain Laurel), along with several types of *arborescens*. One of the latter had large flowers with curly lower petals. The plants are so close together, it was difficult to wedge our way through to see things up close.

The schedule for Saturday afternoon called for a trip to **Hooper Bald**, but predictions of heavy storms discouraged us from attempting it. The rest of the troop decided to chance it and were able to keep ahead of the rain as they made their way to just past the Tennessee border. On their way back, they met the storm, but by the time they reached Hooper the sky had cleared and they were able to make a preliminary trek.

The next morning, although a little foggy, was inviting. So we traveled west along the Cherohala Skyway, with its ever changing altitudes, direction and panoramic vistas. This area was somewhat familiar area to us, since we had taken part in 'The Great Azalea Planting' in the fall of 2011 (see [The Journal of the American Rhododendron Society](#), Vol 66, No 4, Fall 2012). On arrival, near milepost 8, we walked up part of the quarter-mile, well-maintained path, then followed our leaders along a shortcut through the woods to the lower section of where we would find *calendulaceum*. That took us directly to 'Hooper Copper', whose huge blooms open yellow, but quickly turn a coppery-orange. This had been the first of the species there to be rescued from encroaching vegetation by a dedicated team of individuals and groups, led by Jim Brant and George McLellan

Of the Middle Atlantic Chapter of the ARS, and overseen by the U S Forest Service.

Other late blooming “old friends” were visited while roaming the bald, like 'Gold-10', and 'Hooper Pumpkin'. 'Hooper's Best Red' was saved for last. What a surprise. We were thrilled with the opportunity to see the strikingly vibrant, dark red flowers, atypical for the species. Knowing that the fall foliage is almost as spectacular, made me doubly glad that we had obtained some small plants from ANP.

Gregory Bald is usually the next stop in most years, but this challenging 3-4 hour hike was foregone due to the lateness of the bloom season. So we said our goodbyes and headed back east.

Our destination was East Fork Nursery in Sevierville, TN. A quick look at the Road Atlas showed **US 129** to be the most direct route. **BIG MISTAKE** (unless you are looking for an adrenalin rush). We certainly did not realize that this was considered the premier thriller course for driving enthusiasts. And this was a Sunday with wonderful weather conditions: prime time for this ‘sport’. The twists and turns became more frequent and exaggerated as we progressed, and the number of motorcyclists increased proportionately. The speed limit, which had been 55 mph at some point in the past, was posted at 30 mph, but we were barely able to make it to 20 mph. Fortunately, the DOT has foreseen having pokey people on the road, and had provided pull-offs at intervals. So whenever we found ourselves holding back traffic, we took the next opportunity to let them by. Appreciation was shown by a blink of the lights, a beep of the horn, or a wave of the hand. The biggest challenge was the first 11 miles within Tennessee, which is called the Tail of the Dragon, and with good reason. There are 318 curves, many of them S types, within that short span. Not for the faint of heart. Well, we survived Route 129 and arrived in Sevierville, TN at the appointed time. Vivian Abney was there to greet us and show us through her **East Fork Nursery**. Although not usually open on Sundays, she had graciously agreed to let in several plant enthusiasts that day. Among her impressive offerings is a very large collection of deciduous azaleas, all grown from seed and tissue culture. There were about 300 cultivars, many from Earl Sommerville. Choosing was difficult, but with Vivian's help, I picked out 15 wonderful selections. That was all our already space-challenged vehicle would hold. One of my favorites is 'Memory of James Thompson'. This is definitely a place to return to.

Now we were ready to head home, weary, but very glad we had taken the time to enjoy some of the sites where native azaleas can be seen in the wild.

Conclusion

I have heard some objection to using deciduous azaleas in the landscape because of their leafless winter condition. But I think they enhance the garden by offering a different color palette from our evergreens, and can be used in the sunnier spots that the latter do not prefer. Many of the deciduous have spectacular fall foliage that is the equal of most any flower. They also provide architectural interest in the colder months, with their irregular branching habit. Fragrance in some species, and summer bloom times are other reasons to consider using them in your design.

Although we missed peak bloom time, what we were able to see made this trip most worthwhile. I can only imagine the magnificence of finding these plants in full flower.

We are most grateful for the company of our three guides, as they led the way to sites and pointed out plants of interest that we would most likely have missed if we had undertaken this excursion on our own. We recommend this journey to anyone who enjoys botanical excursions.

For deciduous azaleas:

Appalachian Native Plants, 676 Waddell Road, Mountain City, TN 37683 423.727-4264

appalnativeplants@gmail.com

East Fork Nursery, 2769 Bethel Church Road, Sevierville, TN 37876 865.453-6108

Three Exceptionally Generous Donors!

The Chapter has been the recipient of 3 significant gifts this fall. Thank you to all 3 donors! Carolyn and Paul Beck report the items below:

1) Frances and Phil Louer have been generous donors to the Chapter for many years. This year Phil has continued an earlier plan and made available for Chapter sales over 2000 plants, including rare rhododendrons and evergreen and deciduous azaleas.



Phil with some of the thousands of plants he and Frances have planned to donate.

These plants, from 4" to 5 gal pots, are currently being housed at 3 different locations. The intention is to have them all bar coded and inventoried. They will provide a source of sales items and cuttings for years to come.

2) The Northern Virginia chapter has been the fortunate recipient of a bar code label printer from a donor who wishes to remain anonymous. This wonderful gift has already been put to good use, as those of you who went to the September sale and auction witnessed. We will use it to produce thermal transfer scannable barcode labels for all future plant sales and for the 2016 joint convention. We anticipate a big improvement in inventory control and plant sale efficiency. We are currently making good use of the printer to organize and label the large number of plants donated by Phil Louer, as well as several thousand azaleas in the propagation pipeline for our chapter.

3) J Jackson and Lindy Johnson of Appalachian Plants have been very generous with their native plants, donating more than 175 native plants to our chapter. These include:

R. vaseyi, R. calendulaceum from Potterstown Gap, R. calendulaceum Hooper's Best Red

Native azalea hybrids from Gregory Bald

Oakleaf Hydrangeas (Hydrangea quercifolia)

These will be grown for a year or two and then used for NV-ASA events (see 2 examples below).



Native Hybrid #5



'Hooper's Best Red' calendulaceum

Directions to the Kirkwood's

A) If you are coming from the **beltway**, take **Rt. 7, Leesburg Pike**, towards Leesburg. Turn **Right** on **Georgetown Pike** and make an immediate **Left** on **Seneca Rd.** (There is a **Sunoco** Gas station at the corner of 7 and Georgetown Pike) Go to part C).

B) If you are coming from the **Fairfax County Parkway**, exit going **East** on **Rt. 7, Leesburg Pike**. Drive about 1.5 miles. You will see the **Sunoco** Station on the left. Turn **Left** on **Georgetown Pike** and an immediate **Left** on **Seneca Rd.** Continue part C) below.

C) There is a lot of construction on Rt. 7 near your turn and it can be a bit confusing. Stay on **Seneca** about two miles. (Be sure to stay Right at Kentland and Seneca.) Turn **Right** on **Seneca Knoll Dr.** (Just to keep it confusing, there are several streets with Seneca before Seneca Knoll...Seneca View Way and Seneca Farm Way. Seneca Knoll is the next street after Seneca Farm Way. There is a **right turn lane** as a cue.) We are in the **third house on the right**. There are two driveways and you are welcome to park in either one. Unfortunately, they are only one car wide and folks will need to move cars if you plan to leave early. Otherwise park on the street.

Barbara Kirkwood

**Calling all volunteer gardeners, garden clubbers, master gardeners, and those willing and able:
Barbara L. Bullock, Curator of Azaleas & Rhododendrons**

I am seeking up to 25 volunteers to assist in fall clean up in the Azalea Collections at the **National Arboretum** for **Saturday December 6th** from 10am to 3pm. This is always an enjoyable day in the garden and you are guaranteed to meet some nice folks.

We'll meet in the Lobby of the National Arboretum at 9:45a.m. Please park in normal visitor's parking lots. We will have an informal lunch in the garden. If you can stay until 3, you should bring a lunch. Please bring your own gloves and water in a plastic bottle. I will have all tools, rakes, or shovels needed for the various jobs. Dress in layers, and wear appropriate shoes. Bees, poison ivy, getting poked by branches, are some of the hazards you may encounter but usually we don't. If you haven't been before, the garden is on a steep wooded slope, uneven terrain with some nominal walking to get to the work site.

For logistical reasons, I need to limit the number of registered volunteer helpers to 20-25 – so if you are planning to come, please call or email me **as soon as you can** (my contact info. is below). If you need to cancel, please be so kind as to let me know so that I may add another.

Please fill out [a form from me] prior to working in the garden, unless you are a regular Arboretum volunteer. If you forget it, we will have extra copies at the receptionist desk. You may also email it if that works for you.

In the event of rain, sadly we will have to cancel. If we cancel, our front desk receptionist will be notified by 8:30am the morning of December 6th, so that if you are wondering, call 202-245-4523 before leaving home.

Thank you! I look forward to working with each and every one of you!

Ph: (202) 245-4511 Fax: (202) 245-4575

Email: barbara.bullock@ars.usda.gov

Visit <http://www.usna.usda.gov>

Proposed slate of officers for 2015:

President – **Rick Bauer**, Vice President - **Lars Larson**
Secretary – **Susan Bauer**, Treasurer – **Paul Beck**

2015

Mar 8 Meeting with speaker; location TBA

Mar 26-29 ASA Convention, Nacogdoches, TX

Late April-Early May Member garden tours

May 16 Green Spring Gardens sale

July 19 Cutting Exchange

Sept 26 Auction, Kirkwood Presbyterian Ch.

Oct 17 Executive Committee Meeting

Oct 18 Meeting with speaker

Dec 6 Holiday Social

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