

# The Azalea Clipper

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Northern Virginia Chapter Azalea Society of America



## NEXT CHAPTER MEETING:

SUNDAY JULY 26  
1:00 - 4:30

## CUTTING EXCHANGE

and Plant Exchange!  
Please label and sign your name

Kirkwood Presbyterian Church

**Refreshments:  
Pot Luck Everyone**

**Directions and  
How To Take Cuttings**  
on the back page



Your editor always tries to grow azaleas as large as possible, but Bonsai expert **Joe Gutierrez** shows that the other end of the spectrum can be spectacular!

Check out **Rick's** Convention Review p. 6

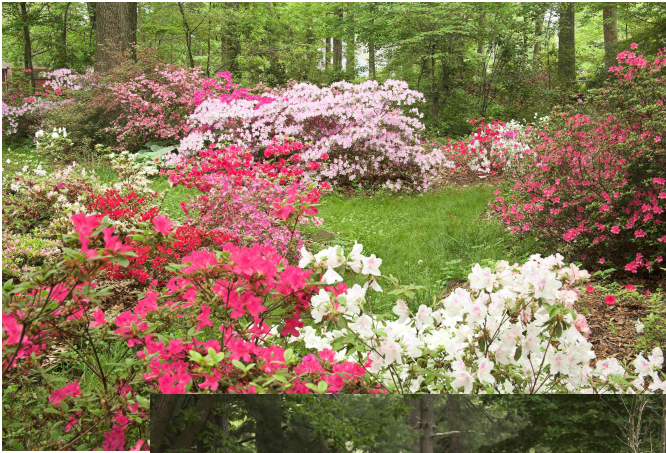


## *Azaleas As Bonsai*

by **Joe Gutierrez**

A bonsai is an artistic plant in a pot – and today it generally means a tree, or a plant trained to look like a tree. Azaleas are quite suitable material for bonsai for several reasons: they adapt well to being grown in pots; they do well in our climatic conditions; most have fairly small leaves and thus foliage is easy to maintain in scale with the size of the plant; they are easily obtainable and are relatively easy to propagate; they lend themselves well to most styles of bonsai (except forests); they can be styled to any size; they bud back readily; and they usually are green all year ‘round – with the bonus of flowers in the Spring!

Continued on p. 4



**Northern Virginia Chapter ASA National Convention, Nacogdoches, TX 2015**

L –R, Robert Ramik, Laura Grant, Paul and Carolyn Beck, Virginia and Dave Banks, Donna and Ronnie Palmer, Dave and Leslie Nanney, Ben Dukes, Susan and Rick Bauer

## *President's Message*

I can't believe that half of the calendar year is over. The first 6 months of the year (and primarily the second quarter) are the peak periods of activity for our chapter and this year was no different. When I look back at the first part of this year, I'm amazed at all of the activities we had and am grateful for the efforts of all of our members who made these activities possible.

I'm also proud of what we have accomplished as a chapter. Mary Olien highlighted some of these accomplishments when she spoke to our chapter in early April. Our financial contributions to Green Spring Gardens have not only brought the opening of the White Garden to the public closer to reality, our support of the Title I program has opened horticulture to students who otherwise might not be afforded the opportunity to participate in garden programs.

Our financial contributions would not be possible without our fund raisers. We had two successful plant sales this year in Charlottesville and at Green Spring Gardens. In addition to raising revenue, these sales supported our Legacy Program in that we made our Legacy hybrids available to the public. These sales also made us better known to the public and resulted in 6 new members to the chapter.

I was pleased to see the excellent turnout of our chapter members at the ASA convention in Nacogdoches in March. The Texas Chapter, in conjunction with the Ruby M. Mize Azalea Garden at Stephen F. Austin University put on a great convention. I enjoyed the gardens, the delicious food and the opportunity to see members of our chapter who are spread from

Canada to Florida and west to Arkansas. We also accomplished some great things at the National level. A group of members is hard at work taking the actions necessary to put **The Azalean** online. We are also hard at work getting the publication of the journal back on track. Additionally, efforts are underway to redesign the ASA website. Stay tuned.

Planning is also actively underway for the 2016 ASA/ARS Convention in Williamsburg which we are sponsoring in conjunction with the American Rhododendron Society (ARS). A lot of planning and work has already been done, but we'll need the support of our members in the actual execution of the convention. I know we can rely on our chapter members to pitch in to make it a success.

We're now coming up to what is my favorite chapter activity for the year, our annual cutting exchange. This is an excellent opportunity to enjoy good food and the camaraderie of our fellow chapter members and guests. It is also a good opportunity to get bitten by the propagation bug. It bit me several years ago and now I'm adding large number of cultivars to my collections by raising plants from the cuttings provided by chapter members. For those not necessarily as bold, frequently there are rooted plants also available.

I tried to keep this message short, however I had so much to cover. I'm thankful for all of the members who have worked so hard to make this year a success. I hope to see you on the 26<sup>th</sup> at the Annual Cutting Exchange.

Rick

### **Captions**

**p. 1 *Pink Gumpo* by Joe Gutierrez & Joe by Sperling**

**p. 2 *Sperling garden* by Sperling, *Osakazuki* by Gutierrez**

***Buck Clagett* by Sperling, *Convention* courtesy of Rick Bauer**

## *Azaleas as Bonsai*

{ continued from p. 1 }

In general – azaleas for bonsai are trained to have a single trunk ( to better simulate a tree ) – and the trunks are wired to have multiple curves (movement). Personally, I like to collect my material from azaleas that are many years old – and have thus acquired sizable trunks. The first example shown here was “rescued” from a trash pile on the curb waiting for the trash collector. A neighbor was doing some re-landscaping and had pulled out some azaleas and discarded them.

I cut them down to suitable size ( approx. 18 inches ) ... cleaned up the root balls removing the old yard soil and then planted them in nursery pots – to bring them back to health. A coarse, Japanese azalea mix was used for potting – the mix having an acid pH which azaleas like. The tree was then regularly watered and fertilized – and then the branches and top gradually trained with the use of aluminum wire. The photographs are self explanatory.



Over the course of a couple of growing seasons the tree has flourished and grown more foliage – and has bloomed well. I usually use Miracid or HollyTone for fertilizer, and supplement with some fertilizers with a high P value, to encourage more flower buds and blossoms. These are



usually designated as “blossom boosters” ...or some such name. I do not know the variety of azalea this is – but it has been a fun tree to grow. And to think it could have been lost to a garbage dump !

The second tree is a pink Gumpo ... and its development is well-documented in the photographs. It was collected from the yard of a friend’s neighbor – on a very hot July day in 2006 because the front yard was being re-landscaped and the azaleas had to be pulled out. On the right, then see p. 1 for this in flower.



The third tree is “Osakazuki” ( a satsuki azalea ) – it is an imported tree from Japan, acquired from an azalea nursery, and then wired and trained and shaped over several years. This is on p. 2 in the upper right. { continued on next page }

The Northern VA Chapter has a **Facebook** page. If you haven't “liked” it then please do. We also need some nice pictures of **YOUR** garden, or an especially nice one you've visited! Please send them to the Clipper editor. We are listed as the “Northern Virginia Chapter of the Azalea Society of America”.

The 4th tree is from an air-layer. A friend and his wife were re-landscaping their backyard in Vienna, VA – and I was permitted to dig up 3 large and tall azaleas. Rather than simply cutting off the tops of the azaleas ( which were almost 7 ft. tall ) - air-layered them, and this is one such plant. Again I do not know the variety, but it has lovely fuchsia flowers in the Spring, and the leaves do turn color in the Fall.



After the azaleas bloom, the flowers are removed immediately and the branch tips are trimmed back to 2 leaves... In Japan the trees are then usually kept in an out of the way place in the garden until the next blooming season ...

Azalea bonsai are fun to grow and care for ... and they do very well in our area....

**Joseph E. Gutierrez, MD, FACS**

photos courtesy Joe Gutierrez

### ***Business Meeting***

We will have a short business meeting as part of the 26<sup>th</sup> July Cutting Exchange. We try to minimize the number of business meetings we have, however we have two topics we need to discuss/vote upon:

1. We need additional seed money for the 2016 convention. All 4 chapters involved had given a total of \$10,000. Deposits required by the bus company alone were \$9,600 (though they agreed to accept ½ that amount). We are looking for approval to provide an additional \$1000 above the \$2500 we have already given. This is just required to cover any unforeseen expenses. Seed money will be the first to be paid back from convention excess revenue.

2. The ASA is submitting paperwork to the IRS which will grant it, and its subordinate chapters, both existing and future, 501(c)(3) status. Right now, only the ASA national has this status and each chapter must obtain it on their own. The cost of this one time submission is \$3000 of which the Northern Virginia Chapter's share is \$400 (the largest 5 ASA chapters will provide this amount while National will fund the remaining \$1000). We need approval to spend this money.

Anyone else who has business issues to discuss at the 26 July meeting should contact **Rick Bauer** no later than 20 July at (757) 833-7737 or [rickbauer@cox.net](mailto:rickbauer@cox.net)

***Azalea Society of America 2015 National Convention, Nacogdoches  
Texas 26-28 March 2015  
by Rick Bauer***

The Azalea Society of America (ASA) held their 2015 national convention in Nacogdoches, TX, the “Garden Capital of Texas.” The convention was sponsored by the Texas Chapter of the ASA and the Ruby M. Mize Azalea Garden at Stephen F. Austin University (SFA) and many of the activities took place at SFA. While Texas suffered the same cold winter as the rest of us, we had great weather during the convention.

Some of our members were able to get to Nacogdoches early enough to explore the town, which is the oldest town in Texas. They have a great visitors center located in the center of town in a former post office building. The town of Nacogdoches has been under nine flags to include the flags of France, Mexico, Spain, the Confederacy, the United States and a few short lived republics.

The Board of Directors (BOD) met on Thursday morning. Two issues of direct interest to our members dealt with **The Azalean**. First, an Azalean Advisory Committee was established to help get **The Azalean** back on track from the standpoint of a publishing schedule and to also assist the editors in resolving any issues they might have. The second was a decision to create a Digitization Committee to digitize **The Azalean**, both past and future issues and to place it online. Currently the only repositories of articles published in **The Azalean** are in private collections, boxes of back issues in the **Bauer** garage which are available for sale or hard copies archived at North Carolina State University in Raleigh, NC. The result is that there are years of great articles which are not readily available for information or research and in danger of being lost. Efforts are currently underway to take all of the necessary steps to make this a reality.



*Ronnie Palmer giving a  
baseball analogy*

Preservation in Action.”

Friday was the first day of garden tours. As a result of the cold weather the previous winter, a number of azalea varieties were only in the bud stage and looked to be about a week away from prime bloom. That didn't mean there weren't enough varieties flowering to provide us with some beautiful color. Most impressive was a stand of Koromo-shikibu which lined both sides of the four lane road between the Ruby Mize and Gayla Mize gardens.



*"Creek bed" in Durr Garden*

The convention formally kicked off on Thursday evening with an interesting and entertaining talk by **Dr. David Creech** providing a background on the four SFA Gardens and Collections. **Bart Brechter**, Curator of Bayou Bend Gardens of the Museum of Fine Arts in Houston and a graduate of the SFA graduate program gave a presentation on “Hunting old Southern Indica Azaleas—



*Paul Beck and Donna and  
Ronnie Palmer at lunch*

Photos this page: Rick Bauer

The morning's tours were to the Ruby Mize Garden and the Mast Arboretum. **Barbara Stump** led us on a tour through the garden. Many members had toured the garden in 2007 and were able to see the maturation of the plants and the garden since then. The gardens also had a number of sculptures on temporary exhibit. One of them was of a raven and was made entirely of oil drilling equipment and tires. After the morning tours we all went to **Barbara Stump's** home and garden for a buffet lunch. **Barbara** lives in a beautiful Queen Anne style home situated on a 2 ½ acre parcel. We were treated to the first of several delicious catered meals we had over the weekend. After lunch, we had the opportunity to explore both her garden and her home. Finally we went to the garden of **Jim and Mary Hagood**. **Mary** is the president of the Texas Chapter. That evening we had dinner on our own and were able to try out some of the many restaurants available in Nacogdoches.



*Barbara Stump Giving an Overview of the Ruby Mize Garden - photo C.Beck*

The evening events were held at the Ina Brundrett Conservation Education Center on the grounds of the Pineywoods Native Plant Center of SFA. **Ronnie Palmer**, one of our chapter members from White Hall, Arkansas, gave an engaging talk focused on Huang and Satsuki azaleas (with an interesting tie-in to baseball). He was followed by Buddy Lee, developer of the Encore<sup>(R)</sup> series of reblooming azaleas who spoke about new developments in the azalea trade. Buddy also provided attendees with liners of a new Encore<sup>(R)</sup> variety – 'Autumn Fire'<sup>TM</sup>. The long day ended with an azalea auction.



*Lunch at Barb Stump's House – photo C. Beck*

Saturday morning we visited the **Furniss** garden and the Gayla Mize Garden (across the road from the Ruby Mize Garden). The Gayla Mize Garden is relatively new, having been started in 2010 in an effort by **Ray Mize** to convert an 8 acre overgrown parcel into a garden in memory of his wife. The goal of the garden is to collect as many different varieties of deciduous azaleas as can be grown in their zone 8b climate. We returned to the Brundett Center for a delicious Mexican-inspired buffet lunch before heading back out for our afternoon of garden tours. In the afternoon we visited the **Elliott** and **Durr** gardens. The **Durr** garden was built on 1 ½ city lots and cleverly turned a city drainage ditch into an attractive creek bed.

The final event for the convention was the annual meeting and banquet. It was held in Mast Hall in downtown Nacogdoches. Once again we had good food and a great speaker, **Dr. Jared Barnes**, a new member of the staff at Stephen Austin. The topic was “People and Plants Make Great Companions for Azaleas.” I was also able to present a preview of our 2016 convention. It was great to be able to get together with all of the Northern Virginia Chapter members from different geographic areas. We had chapter members from Arkansas, Canada, Texas and the Tidewater Area of Virginia in attendance in addition to our members from Northern Virginia. At the conclusion of the evening, another successful convention was at an end. We look forward to our convention in Williamsburg next year.

Sorry, I ran out of room for the continuation of the Bowie Mill Hybrid list. Hope to continue it soon.

## **Taking Cuttings** **(from the 7/10 Clipper)**

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!

### **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**

The Chapter Website has info on the conventions, dues, plant photos, back issues of the Clipper, member information and more!

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

### **2015**

**July 26** Cutting Exchange, Kirkwood Presbyterian Ch  
**Sept 26** Auction, Kirkwood Presbyterian Ch.  
**Oct 17** Executive Committee Meeting  
**Oct 18** Meeting with speaker, Kirkwood Pres. Ch.  
**Dec 6** Holiday Social, Beck's residence

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