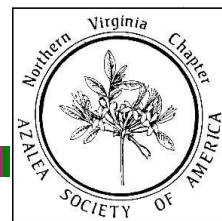


The Azalea Clipper

Volume 37 Issue 4 October 2016

Published 1980-2010 by Frances and Phil Louer

Northern Virginia Chapter Azalea Society of America



NEXT CHAPTER MEETING:

SUNDAY OCTOBER 23
1:30 - 4:30

LIFE IN THE SOIL

...And Plant Exchange!
Please label and sign your name.
Pictures appreciated.
Soil only damp.

Kirkwood Presbyterian Church
directions on last page

Refreshments:

A - K



Dr. Paulette Royt to speak on *Life In The Soil*

The talk will be divided into two parts.

In **Part I**, the composition of soil will be presented. This will include a discussion of pore space, minerals, and organic matter of the soil, including the soil food web. Emphasis will be on the various types of living organisms found in the soil and what each group does to recycle soil nutrients.

Part II will apply this soil biology to good gardening techniques in a discussion of best practices, not only to grow healthy Azaleas and other plants, but also to be good stewards of the earth.

Dr. Royt earned a BS and MS degree in Biology from American University, and a PhD in Microbiology from the University of Maryland. After a fellowship at the National Institutes of Health, Paulette joined the Biology Department of George Mason University where she taught numerous courses within microbiology and pursued research in pathogenic microbiology. Upon retiring from GMU, Paulette became a Master Gardener at Green Spring Gardens where she serves as a docent and speaker on many topics of horticulture.

For all your azalea info: **Club** and more – www.nv-asa.org

National – www.azaleas.org



Barb Kirkwood



Emmanuel Mangona



Lars Larson



Auction Photo Credits:
top 2 and middle left by **Carolyn Beck**.
Other 3 by **Rick Bauer**



Dave Nanney

President's Message

I write this message after another extremely successful chapter activity. Our fall sale/auction was the most successful yet, far exceeding previous years. While participating in the event, there were many things which impressed me...the number and quality of plants, the automation and the collaboration with other plant societies. What impressed me most, however, was watching all of our wonderful members out there working long and hard as a team to make this event a success. When someone would complete a task, they'd jump in and help someone else. This was a repeat of the wonderful effort in April to make our convention a resounding success. Certainly we're blessed with a large number of talented members...but I think it is more. I think our members are genuinely nice people who enjoy working with each other to

achieve a common objective – to advance the goals of the chapter and the society as a whole. I commend all of you. That being said, we're always looking for folks to step forward and take leadership roles in the chapter. This can be running for an elected position or taking charge of a committee (or working with someone else to co-chair). One of our most pressing committee roles right now is Hospitality. If you are interested in leading, or just helping, please respond to the call for volunteers which is located in this issue of the Azalea Clipper. If you have a special skill which might be useful to the chapter, bring it to our attention...we'll find some way to put it to use. Once again, thanks for all you do!

Rick Bauer

Plural

by Barry Sperling

After years of research in arcane libraries I have discovered the use of plurals for groups: A flock of birds, a school of fish, a hive of bees, a pod of whales, a clutter of cats, a parliament of owls, a sleuth of bears, a streak of tigers, a silence of mimes, a neverthriving of jugglers. OK, one of those I just made up. So sue me.

Which brings me around to gardeners. Gardeners, for all the solitary pleasures enjoyed, are often social animals, gathering in groups to hear speakers, trade plant material, visit gardens and snack at a buffet. These are often called “meetings”, “tours”, “conventions” and the like. But there is no term for the actual collection of the gardeners themselves as there would be, say, for a mob of kangaroos (or a mob of mobsters??).

What to call this grouping? Almost everything we grow turns out to be green, so: a Green of Gardeners? Maybe, but the “village green” may already have co-opted that term and even oil companies try to brand themselves as “green” nowadays.

A Flowering of Gardeners? Pretty appropriate, but vegetable gardeners don't often think of the flowers that their plants produce. And shade gardeners think more often of texture than color.

A Raceme of Gardeners? Could be, as we pack in a meeting room or a hotel check-in line we do resemble the flowers packed closely on a stem. But the word is a little too obscure and I didn't exactly know how to pronounce it myself until I looked it up while writing this.

A Waiting of Gardeners? One thing we all do is wait for almost a year to enjoy particular plants for a short time. We wait for the rain. Wait for the sunrise. Wait for the end of winter. Unfortunately, most people who will hear the term (and not read it) will look first to our girth, thinking of the homonym “weighting”.

[[Continued on the next page.]]

Plural [continued from previous page]

A Patience of Gardeners? I would take that as a compliment and be happy with the term. A little quiescent for my taste, especially as I'm simultaneously tearing out weeds, slapping at gnats and clearing the sweat from my eyes.

What else is common to gardeners? We've probably all stood in our gardens with a coffee cup, thinking about what needs to be transplanted (a Cup of Gardeners?). We all do laundry after the day is over, we all wear hats, we all use tools (a Shovelful of Gardeners?). I'm out of ideas, other than A Hopeful of gardeners. You can do better so please make a suggestion. Off now to meet a Host of Hosta gardeners!

[The above was read by Audrey Stelloh, who suggested "A Puttering of Gardeners". Works for me.]

[Paper messages in bottles are supposed to be found on seashores. The below, however, appeared in a bottle on the checkout table at the recent Auction!]

The Wrong Recipe

by California Rose

Triumphantly throwing my hands in the air, I declare this is my year! I have bumbled through several cutting exchanges and attempted propagations, and I have a hundred dead, discarded sticks and a grand total of one plant for my efforts. I have confessed my ineptitude and the failures from those first efforts refrigerating my cuttings for weeks, using popsicle sticks for name tags and suffering an epidemic of mold.

But this is my year. I planned ahead, checking my stock of soil contents. I gathered my pots, Clorox, plastic gloves, and plastic plant markers. I headed to the kitchen with my stash with a look of concern from my spouse who asked if I was preparing a fresh batch of moldy sticks. My daughter grimaced and seemed to be readying the trashcan. She asked if I would be making dead dirt again. I dismissed all the malcontents for their negative energy and confidently declared I was preparing so I could get the cuttings into the pots in just a few days rather than the weeks it took me in the past. I scrubbed my hands and pots in hot, soapy water with a scrub brush. Spouse took pity on me and joined in. I mentioned THIS year I wasn't going to have any mold growing on MY plants. Spouse raised an eyebrow and looked doubtful. In my frenzy, I scrubbed my soil bucket and the trays the pots would rest on. Finally, I measured out a cup of bleach and ten cups of water into the bucket. I wasn't going to leave this to an estimate. I donned the plastic gloves and swished the bleach water completely around the bucket and then carefully soaked the pots and the plant markers. Spouse questioned the fanatical cleaning when I was going to fill them with dirt, which I promptly ignored. I finally took everything outside and let them bask in the sunshine to dry. I mixed up my soil, 1/3 sphagnum moss, 1/3 Pine fines, and 1/3 sand. Someone had mentioned during one of my rants about my cutting failure that the soil may be too heavy, so I threw in a half bag of Perlite that was residing in the garage. I added water and mixed until the soil held together if squeezed but did not drip water. Then I filled the sunbaked pots and lined them up on the trays. I was ready.

The next day, at the Azalea meeting, Carolyn Beck declared that propagating Azaleas is easy using a good mix and some care. But her soil mix recommendation had no mention of sand or pine fines. Trying not to sound too stupid, I inquired about sand in the mix and someone suggested it might not be sterile. And the light went on! It may not have been me, or the pots, but the dirty sand that had been stalking and assassinating my cuttings. [cont. on p. 5]

Call For Volunteers

We are approaching the end of another year. One of our end-of-year activities is to elect officers and put together our program for the coming year. Our elected positions are President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer. We also need help on a number of committees, the most pressing being Hospitality. We can also use help with Outreach (e.g., communications, advertising). We will also be decentralizing our program for propagating and raising plants to sale size. If you are interested in assisting in these or any other areas either in a primary or assistant role, please contact Rick Bauer (757) 833-7737 or rickbauer@cox.net.

The Wrong Recipe [continued]

I gleefully declared to spouse that my lack of propagation success was not due to my scarcity of talent. I had the wrong recipe and must have practically invited the conniving mold in for coffee with my cuttings. Spouse looked skeptical, something that seems to occur often. I did have a dilemma. I had prepared all my pots with the wrong recipe and was not at all ready for my cuttings. Into the refrigerator they went. My daughter opened it presumably to obtain jam or milk or other things that one normally retrieves from a refrigerator, sighed deeply and walked away. I dumped all the soil from my pots into an old bucket. I could use that to pot my cuttings once they passed the precarious rooting stage. Apparently, rooted Azaleas do not find the sand so offensive.

I headed back into the kitchen with soap and pots. I could hear spouse chortling from the other room. I lightly scrubbed out any of the offending mold-making soil and re-dipped every pot into bleach solution. I thought about skipping the bleach since they had been previously baptized but the thought of mold mutilated cuttings inspired me on. I wanted to get right to potting but I had used up all my perlite on the defiled soil.

So I trundled on down to the local nursery seeking perlite. Unfortunately they had none, but they did have "some great potting soil." I said I really needed perlite not potting soil. He looked puzzled. I mumbled that I was with the Azalea Society and needed a particular recipe to propagate them. I could hear some plants behind me sniggering at the big, bad Society member so I shoved my black thumbs in my pockets and ignored their caustic criticism. The garden guy, however, looked interested and asked, "Is that like propagating other plants? I hear each plant needs something different." Good grief! Now I'm in trouble. How was I to know about propagating other plants; I couldn't even propagate Azaleas successfully. I confessed that I didn't know about other plants, but with Azaleas... I faked confidence... and I repeated everything I could remember that Carolyn said; new growth cuttings taken in the morning, angle cut, dip in rooting hormone (the liquid stuff not the powder), place in sphagnum and perlite, keep in plastic bag for 8-12 weeks. I mentioned, with great authority, that we have superb sales of unusual Azaleas a couple times a year. I didn't confess that I never provided any of the plants. Garden guy offered to let me keep some cuttings in his green house if I needed some space. I would love to need space. But I think the green house might be a bit overwhelming for my single plant.

I acquired some needed perlite from another nursery and mixed my soil, half perlite and half sphagnum moss...no filthy sand. I used gloves to mix it all up. I think I remember reading somewhere that sphagnum moss can be irritating to the skin...but I was actually more concerned about some mold spores coming from my hands. [cont. on p. 6]

I refilled my pots and arranged them orderly on my trays. I transformed the sunny room that my family had set aside for my “gardening” practice into a staging area for a tidy, organized dirt army.

Now to my plant technique. I washed my hands but still didn’t want to touch the cuttings...you know that potential mold issue. I put on my plastic gloves; the one size fits all kind that usually means they fall off the moment you actually try to do something. I looked for my little cutting knife with the blade that can be snapped off when it is dull but could only find my box cutter. I tried to work with those impossible gloves and my box cutter but I felt like I was manhandling my cuttings. I needed a radical new plan.

I dumped the gloves and the box cutter, and I washed my hands and retrieved a sharp scissors. Spouse raised an eyebrow and mentioned something about Obsessive Compulsive disorder with all this foraging and washing, but did come in to help. I persevered, with naked hands, gently handling the cuttings, taking off all but three or four leaves, removing the terminal bud, angle cut, and dipping them in the liquid rooting solution for five seconds. I used a chopstick to make five holes in the soil so the rooting hormone would not be rubbed off by pushing in the cuttings and then used my finger and the stick to firm them in. Finally I put two pots into a new zip-lock bag, spritzed them with water, blew into the bag, sealed them in, and said a little prayer. I’m pretty sure in that moment I heard my daughters eyes roll into the back of her head.

They are neatly lined up on a little display case out of direct sunlight, looking fresh, perfect and mold free. I will have to wait for a few weeks before I expect to see any of the dreaded fungi. But that won’t happen because this is my year! By the holiday party, I should know if it really was a case of bad recipe or it is just me. Or maybe neither. Maybe it is all that negative energy my family is giving off. In that case, next year is my year.

Reflections on Azaleas

by Lloyd Willis

The academic year of 1969-70 was the year I first became aware that azaleas existed. I had accepted a job as a 26 year old general science teacher in Easley, S.C. My wife Margaret, baby Sarah, and I needed a place to live. We found a basement apartment in the home of a retired Methodist minister and his wife.

Both the front yard and back yard were extensively planted with shrubs. That spring when those shrubs bloomed, my attention was really caught. The front yard plants were fairly small with blossoms of two or three colors. However, in the back yard the plants were quite tall with blossoms showing several colors. I was very impressed.

I asked the minister’s wife what type of plants they were, why did they have so many, and why the ones in the back yard were so tall. She told me her husband was a collector of azaleas. At every church they served, he would plant azaleas in the front and back yard of the parsonage. When they moved to the next church, he would leave all the front yard azaleas but would take the back yard azaleas to the new parsonage and finally to this their retirement home. Since that was done over a forty year period, it explained in part the variety and height of the azaleas (some were over six feet tall).

After that spring, I knew that some day I wanted to have an azalea collection. A mere eight years later when we purchased our current home, the azalea collection was started. I ordered by mail 30 rooted cuttings of evergreen azaleas. These were immediately planted in full sun with no wind protection in central Virginia red clay. You can guess what happened with my first try at growing azaleas. Not funny at the time but it brings a smile and a shake of my head now.

Named Klimavicz Evergreen Azalea Hybrids

as of Dec 2015

- Caitlin Marie** (1998) Mid-season, 2" Double Pink, ruffled, very double, floriferous, Medium-sized plant, with dark glossy foliage; Elsie Lee x Satellite (LS-91-47)
- Lovely Linda** (2000) Mid-season, 2" Hose-in-hose, light Pink, lighter center, Great glossy foliage, Medium-sized; Florence Waldman x Dayspring (WD-93-11)
- Sandy Dandy** (2003) Early-mid season, 2" Single, Yellow White, light Pink base of tube, overall appearance is beige color, flower holds up well in full sun. Medium-sized. Leopold Astrid x Girard Fuchsia (LG-95-63)
- Gloria Louis** (2005) Mid-season 2" Single, Purple with White center, large Red blotch, starburst appearance. Leaves small, medium-sized plant. Carol Kittel x Girard Fuchsia (KF-98-123)
- Brenda Marie** (2005) Mid-season, 3" Single, White, huge Green blotch, flower stays upright. Leaves narrow, mat green. Low-medium sized plant. CB-1 x (Elsie Lee x Dancing Butterfly) (BE-97-27)
- Spirit of Valdosta** (2006) Mid-season, 2" Single, Bright Pink, 'V' in blotch Elsie Lee x Gay Paree (LP-93-3)
- Isabella Maria** (2007) Mid-season, 2" Single, Lavender, White center Carol Kittel x Girard Fuchsia (KF-98-111)
- James Scott** (2007) Mid-season, 2" Semi-double, White w/Purple stripes, medium sized plant Mary E. Thomsen x Florence Waldman (TW-97-5)
- Thaissa** (2007) Early-mid season, 1.5" Semi-double, White center w/Purple wash, no blotch Carol Kittel x Good Times (AT-99-16)
- Nancy Lynn** (2007) Early-mid season, 2" Double, Pale Lavender, Yellow cast, ruffled Nancy Dippel x Florence Waldman (NW-97-56)
- Mary Lou Dority** (2009) Mid-season, 2.5" Single, White with Pink edges, large Red blotch Medium-sized, very nice; Betty Christopher x Komo Kulshan (BK-00-14)
- Barbara Tozzi** (2010) Early-mid season, 2" Semi-double Pink, light, Pink flecks, very nice; Medium-sized; Nancy Dippel x Florence Waldman (NW-00-3)
- Zoe Elizabeth Stoltz** (2011) Mid-season, 2.5" Semi-double, Purple w/White center, ruffled, Medium-sized; Carol Kittel x Girard Fuchsia (KF-98-41)

[[7 more plants to list, in an upcoming issue!]]



More Auction Photos by **Carolyn Beck!**

Upper-left: **Sherley Channing** with the Daylily Society

Upper-right: **Joe Gutierrez & Chuck Croft**

Left: **Ralph Habegger**

Directions to Kirkwood Presbyterian Church

8336 Carrleigh Parkway, Springfield, VA 22152, 703-451-5320 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

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2016

- Oct 22 Executive Committee Meeting**
- Oct 23 Meeting with speaker Dr. Paulette Royt**
- “Better Garden – Less Work”, Kirkwood Pres. Church**
- Dec 4 Holiday Social**

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