

The Azalea Clipper

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Published 1980-2010 by Frances and Phil Louer

Northern Virginia Chapter Azalea Society of America



NEXT CHAPTER MEETING:

SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 26
1:00 - 4:00

SALE AND AUCTION

Silent Auction 1 pm
Live Auction w/ **Paul Davis!** 2:30
Fixed Price Always Available

Kirkwood Presbyterian Church
directions on p. 6

Share the flier with your friends
from the link below

www.nv-asa.org



Ring #1 is a floriferous introduction by George Ring. Check out his story on p. 4!

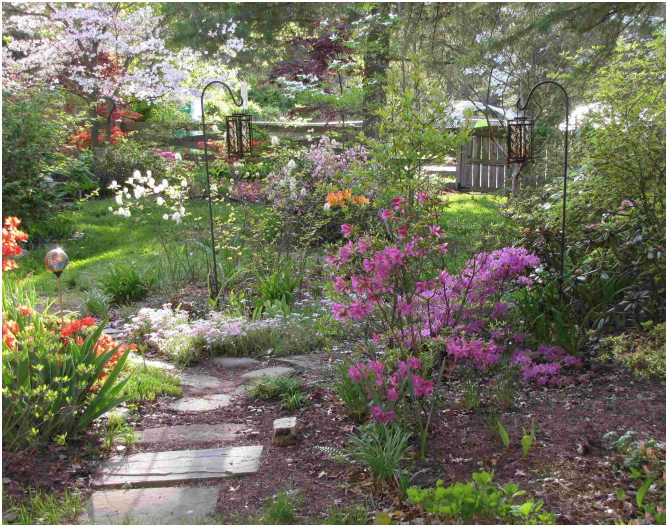
Interested in Rejuvenation? Check out **Barbara Bullock's** take on that on p. 5!



Orchido is another Ring hybrid that looks good in any garden. This picture by **Carolyn Beck**, upper right: **Sperling**. p.2 & p. 3 captions, credits on p. 6

Did you know that you could preview many of the 500 plants in the auction by going to www.nv-asa.org/sale ?

One of the many enhancements by web maestro **Paul Beck**. Others? How about reading earlier **Clippers**? They're all there! And the **Azaleans**? There are links you can follow to read them also as they are being put online (much of that digitization work being done, and copyright approvals being obtained by **Susan Bauer**). And, don't forget the azalea database there, and membership information! A cornucopia!



President's Message

As we head into the fall, I'd like to look back on some amazing initiatives implemented in the Azalea Society this year, achieved by members of our chapter. First off, Paul Beck enhanced the ASA website by putting ASA membership records online. We are now able to communicate with all of our members either by email or snail mail. Chapter presidents are able to communicate with their members more easily. The recent mailing from ASA President **J Jackson** is the latest implementation of this capability (more on that below).

Susan took over management of back issues of *The Azalean* from **Eve Harrison**. She recognized the vast wealth of information which was sitting in boxes, not easily accessible. She put together a proposal for digitizing *The Azalean* which was approved by the ASA Board of Directors at Nacogdoches. **Paul Beck** and I put significant effort into scanning the paper copies of the journal and creating searchable pdf files of *The Azalean* content. While work still continues to get copyright release from authors, we now have all issues of *The Azalean* back to 1991 online in digital format. Work continues to improve the ability to search for specific information. I encourage you to check it out at <http://www.nv-asa.org/azaleans>.

The publication of *The Azalean* was also way behind schedule and published on an ad hoc basis. Members of our chapter were instrumental in putting together a plan to get the publication back on schedule. This initiative was also helped greatly by two members of the Texas Chapter, **Barb Stump** and **Pam Fitch** (both former editors of *The Azalean*) who volunteered to be editor and layout designer, respectively. ASA President **J Jackson** recently sent out an email and letter (for those without valid email addresses), providing an updated status on the publication. I am confident that we are well on the way to publishing *The Azalean* on a regular and predictable schedule.

Our chapter, in conjunction with three chapters of the American Rhododendron Society will be conducting the 2016 convention in Williamsburg. Significant planning and other efforts have been underway for well over a year now. As we get closer to the convention, we will be once again asking members of our chapter to volunteer to help in conducting the convention. I'm confident that, once again, we will make significant contributions to the ASA. Thank you for all you do.

Rick





George Ring, Jane and Col. Ray Goodrich, Dr. Franklin West, Dr. John Wister. Photo by Emil Hager

George Ring III, Fairfax Hybridizer (1925 - 2001)

“Helpful and Affable” (**Don Voss**), “Generous, Personable” (**Norman Beaudry**), “Wonderful, Gentle, Sweet, Knowledgeable” (**Barbara Bullock**), “Generous to a fault” (**Leslie and Dave Nanney**), “Consummate Gentleman” (**Don Hyatt**).

Who wouldn't want to be fondly remembered in that way!? Many people around the country were touched by Ring's volunteer work in rhododendrons and azaleas. He was president of both the American Rhododendron Society and the local Potomac Valley Chapter. He organized the ARS study group on the Gable hybrids which produced the chapter on **Joseph Gable** for the well known book “Hybrids and Hybridizers”, as well as making contributions to other chapters in that book. The American Rhododendron Society recognized him in 1979 with a Silver Medal. That medal represented his work for the Society (including being on their Board), frequent contributions to their Journal, many speaking engagements and contributions to the seed exchange, as well as the Gable work. Major

committees that he involved himself with included a rating study and a “Good doer” listing for the different regions.

Ring was always happy to help out. A frequent lunch companion of Don Voss when they worked near each other, he pointed Voss to a NIST worker who could help Don in his study of colors and color charts. When the neophyte Nanneys came to see his garden he pointed them to the American Rhododendron Society and spent some time explaining to their young children how to be hybridizers themselves. Following that he provided the Nanneys with seeds and even fluorescent lights!

While working full time for the Dept. of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, as a research highway engineer he added his hybridizing to the above volunteer work. Originally planning on creating plants that completely covered themselves in small flowers, he bent to the appreciation of his visitors and introduced plants which they favored, too (such as 'Fairfax').

Working on 2 wooded 5-acre lots north of Rt. 50 in Fairfax (across from the later-to-be-built Fair Oaks Mall and now a cluster of dense suburbia) Ring worked for many years to get the plants he, and his visitors, were looking for. The evaluation of introductions went on for a decade each, not rushing into distribution until he was satisfied that the flower, plant habit and hardiness were up to his standards.

After retiring in the mid-'90s he moved to Bent Mountain, VA, SW of Roanoke, to continue his hybridizing. Prior to the move he donated many species plants to the National Arboretum. Unfortunately, ill-health intervened and soon forced him to move down the mountain to Roanoke for medical care. **Paul James** had visited him often on Bent Mountain and then assisted with the transplanting of many favorites down to his own property, as well as young plants and seedlings.

Paul wrote: "George passed away on December 29, 2001. When he died, Helen, his wife, gave me all the plants we had lined out and I brought them to my house and got them in the ground. All of his records and letters were given to me also and are now in the archives in Charlottesville." [ed. Note: see below]

Paul continued: "I did not have a long time with George but what I did have is a treasured memory. He had one plant that he insisted that I plant in my garden: Crater Lake x R. carolinianum and he got to select its spot. It is truly the highlight of my collection. His crosses continue to amaze me, and how could you top 'Fairfax'?"

In his article in the September 1998 Azalean (Volume 20, #3, p. 52) Ring listed 5 registrations:

'Lucent' = 'Dream' x 'James Gable' { strong pink, HNH }

'Taenzer' = 'Moonbeam' x 'Beacon' { white, pink blotch, thin pink border, single }

'Ring #1' = unk { pink, semi-double HNH }

'Orchido' = 'Polar Seas' x 'Debonaire' { pastel lavender bordered white, single }

'Fairfax' = 'Polar Seas' x 'Debonaire' {pink,white and green center, best winter foliage}

Also from Ring:

Azaleas introduced from his seeds with his permission:

'Al's Picotee' = 'Elsie Lee' x R kiusianum var kiusianum { variable pink and white, blotch, HNH }

'Ring's True' { from H. H. Hume, white, HNH, raised by Ray and Jane Goodrich }

Rhododendrons introduced by Ring, not mentioned in the Azalean article:

'John C. White' { dark pink with white }

'Helen Ring' { pink, blotch, from 'Aureum' }

[Editor's note: Thanks to all of the people mentioned above for their contributions to this article. The p.4 picture was furnished by Norman Beaudry. However, there is information missing which would improve it, such as dates of: his move to Fairfax, the move to Bent Mountain and the move to Roanoke. If someone can come up with any of those I'll publish that information in a later Clipper. Also, other pictures of him would be appreciated.

In addition, his wife Helen and Paul James gave a large collection of his papers to the U. of VA library in 1988. If someone would spend some time with them I'm sure that there would be a large amount of information about him available for a subsequent article. Details are at this URI:

<http://ead.lib.virginia.edu/vivaxtf/view?docId=uva-sc/viu01844.xml>

]

Barry Sperling

Rejuvenation

Talking recently with **Barbara Bullock**, curator of azaleas at the National Arboretum, about pruning azaleas, she mentioned to your editor that many mature azaleas were not in need of **trimming**, or **shearing** but **rejuvenation**. [Continued on p. 6]

I wanted to know what this entailed. She reminded me that an azalea shrub is not a tree, but a collection of branches coming out of the crown. When a large, thick old branch becomes leggy it can be pruned out in order to encourage new young shoots.

“How far?” “As far as you can reach.” she said. “Remove the entire branch as far down as 1' off the ground using a sharp tool such as a folding saw. Make sure the last cut is a clean cut. But never remove more than 1/3 of the whole plant in one season. You can return to do more the following year.”

“So you do this in June after the flowering?” I asked.

“No, remedial pruning is done in March so that the plant has the maximum opportunity for growth of new shoots. Yes, by pruning out large branches in March you are removing some flower buds – but you are leaving many other flower buds because you are not cutting back the entire plant, only removing selected leggy limbs. This will encourage the juvenile growth. After a few years the plant will have filled in and look much better.”

“Shearing (or shaping) is done right after flowering,” she said, “And trimming (removing dead, dying, broken, protruding or diseased branches) can be done anytime.”

Rejuvenation was done to the Arboretum azaleas on the Glenn Dale hillside in March, 2013 and I was sent some pictures that verified the wisdom of the practice. Check them out yourself on p. 2. The picture on the upper right is of a plant that needs rejuvenation. The middle left picture shows it after the first spring and the middle right picture shows it during the second spring. It worked!

Captions p. 2 *Barbara Bullock's Garden, from Bullock; next 3: the Arboretum, from Bullock; bottom: Cutting Exchange from Sperling* **p. 3** *Cutting Exchange clockwise from left: Belcher, B. Reinke, S. Hedrick, D. Neckles, R. Bauer, S. Bauer, Martin's cuttings lecture, Coleman, Krabill from Sperling*

Directions to Kirkwood Presbyterian Church

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

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

2015

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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