

May18 Message to Members

Chapter Members,

We are now in prime time! Spring is my favorite time of year as my garden starts coming alive again. Most of my evergreen plants survived the winter. I'm going around and inspecting my sticks (deciduous) to see if there is any sign of life. So far most seem to have made it.

My evergreen azaleas are busting out in color. Even with the damage from deer this winter, this seems to be one of the best years I've seen for blooms.

We had a wonderful time at the **Azalea Society National Convention** in Little Rock, Arkansas. This

was the first time the convention was held in Arkansas. Given we had a minimal society presence in Arkansas, the convention was planned and executed by a combination of **Arkansas Master Gardeners, Ozark Chapter ARS Members, ASA members** living in Arkansas, the **Louisiana Chapter** of the ASA and ASA members from other chapters...specifically the plant sale was run by Northern Virginia chapter members. Plants were provided by a variety of members from different chapters and At Large. Special thanks go to **Janet Carson**, head of the **Arkansas Master Gardeners**, who directed the effort and served as a knowledgeable bus captain.

The society tried something new at this convention. The day before the convention started, we conducted an **Azalea 101** workshop for **Arkansas Master Gardeners** on the campus of the University of Arkansas, Little Rock. About 70 **Master Gardeners** signed up for the workshop which ran from 9 am to 2:30 pm. As part of the registration fee, attendees were given a half year membership in the society. Efforts are underway to establish a society chapter in Arkansas.

Back to the convention, the azaleas were spectacular, however Mother Nature was not cooperative with the weather. The first day it poured rain and the second day we even got snow. Our first stop on Friday was chapter members **Ronnie and Donna Palmer's Azalea Hill Nursery** in White Hall, AR. The azaleas were in full bloom, however the heavy rain put a damper (pun intended) on the visit.



Formosa and other azaleas in the Bauer Garden



Azaleas in bloom at Azalea Hill Garden and Nursery



Azaleas and other plants in bloom at Garvan Gardens

Our next stop was a visit to **Garvan Gardens** in Hot Springs, AR. The 210 acre botanical garden is part of the University of Arkansas and was established for education, research and public service. We were able to catch the tail end of their tulip season. Again, the azaleas were in fine form with a large number of **Encore®** azaleas as well as many other varieties including natives.

That night we had dinner at the hotel and were treated to two interesting presentations. **Stan Brown**, an At Large member presented a talk on

“Woody Plant Breeding in Arkansas.” It was interesting hearing him talk about delivering **Cardin-Harris**

azaleas (developed by Arkansas hybridizers) to the first Walmart in Bentonville. **Gerald Klingaman** gave a talk in “On the Worldwide Distribution of Azaleas.”

On Saturday we headed north east of Little Rock to **Ann Woods’** garden in Searcy, Arkansas. It was snowing lightly as we walked up the Woods’ long driveway. They have a beautiful garden, but I think the highlight was the wonderful wood stove they had going full blast in their barn.



“Snow Kissed” Azaleas at the Coleman Garden

After the Woods’ garden we headed to Batesville, AR to the garden of society member **Larry Coleman**. We had lunch in Batesville’s new community center. This modern 100,000 square foot facility includes a gym and aquatics center. It



Water Feature in Coleman Garden

was certainly surprising to see a facility of this size in a town of 10,000. **Larry’s** garden sits on the edge of a steep slope. The busses dropped us off at **Larry’s** house and picked us up again at the bottom of the hill. **Larry’s** neighbors have generously allowed him to expand the garden to the steep hilly portions of their properties.

After leaving the **Coleman Garden**, we headed to North Little Rock to the Old Mill. This building was seen in the opening scenes of "Gone with the Wind" and is thought to be the only remaining structure from the film. The site includes a large number of concrete structures and a bridge created by sculptor **Dionico Rodriguez**. By this point the weather had turned beautiful, as were the azaleas on the property.



Old Mill in North Little Rock

That evening we had our banquet and business meeting. Our keynote speaker was **Charlie Andrews**, Vice President of the Society, who gave a talk on "Our Native Deciduous Azaleas." **Charlie** is extremely knowledgeable on native azaleas, which was quite apparent from his talk.

Jim Brant from the Vaseyi Chapter spoke about the award he was given by the **U.S. Forest Service** for the efforts to restore **Hooper Bald**. He stated that the restoration would not have been accomplished without the hard work of many members of both the Azalea and Rhododendron Societies. After **Jim** was finished, I presented him with the society's **Distinguished Service Award** for his many contributions to the society and promoting azaleas including leading the **Hooper Bald** effort, efforts to provide a mower to the **Forest Service** for maintaining **Gregory Bald**, opening his garden for tours during the 2016 convention and working to help establish the **McDonald Garden** at **Norfolk Botanical Garden**.

Tom Johnson gave a preview of the 2019 convention which will be in Summerville, SC, near Charleston.



Northern Virginia Chapter Members and Associate Members at the Convention l-r Dave Banks, Dan Neckel, Virginia Banks, Joanne Neckel, Laura Grant, Robert Ramik, Dianne Gregg, Susan Bauer, Carolyn Beck, Rick Bauer, Barb Kirkwood, Robert Thau, Donna and Joe Coleman, Dave and Leslie Nanney, Diane Reinke, Paul Beck, Budne Reinke. Missing - Ronnie and Donna Palmer and Charlie Andrews.

On Sunday morning we said goodbye to our friends from across the country. On our way home we were able to stop and see **Bill Pinkerton's** garden in Crossville, TN. **Bill** spent his entire military career at Fort Myer. He has an extensive collection of **Glenn Dale** azaleas. Unfortunately he had a hard freeze two nights prior to our visit so all of his early blooming blossoms were dead.

From the **Pinkerton Garden** we went to Knoxville where we visited **Fred** and **Sandra Anderson**, members of the **Vaseyi Chapter**. The **Anderson's** have a beautiful property and garden with a great view of the Smoky Mountains. Their garden is relatively young, but is impressive. I hope to visit in a few years when the plants have had the opportunity to mature.



View of the Smoky Mountains from the Anderson Garden, Knoxville, TN

Cosby Garden Tour – 26 April

Many chapter members made the trip to Rockville, VA to visit the garden of chapter members **Roy** and **Elizabeth Cosby**. **Paul** and **Carolyn Beck** and **Dave** and **Leslie Nanney** were there as well as chapter members **Anita** and **Doug Burke** from Toronto. Additionally, **Senora Simpson** and **Joe Miller** from Ben Morrison were in attendance. The **Cosbys** have a beautiful 79 acre parcel with over 11 acres planted in azaleas, rhododendrons and other companion plants. They have given their property to Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden in Richmond and it is now known as the Lewis Ginter Nature Reserve.



Cosby Garden - Rockville, VA
(above and bottom right)

Many of our members, who attended the Williamsburg Convention in 2016, visited the garden as part of our Richmond tour. Unfortunately the garden had suffered a severe frost which killed most of the blossoms. This year Mother Nature was much kinder and the blooms were spectacular. We thank **Roy** and **Elizabeth** for opening their home and garden to our chapter.



Member Garden Tours - The following members have opened up their gardens for tours in early May. Please call ahead to arrange a time to visit (and directions as necessary).

Lars Larson, Fairfax, anytime, 703-277-3441

Barry Sperling Alexandria, anytime, first week of May best, 703-765-7062

Ajit Thakur, anytime, Springfield, 703-569-4337

David and Patsy Meadows, anytime Warrenton, 540-349-0120

The Nanney Garden will be open during the entire garden season without any advanced arrangements necessary. Their address is 8646 Tuttle Road, Springfield.

Note: You must enter Tuttle from Hillside Road. Some map programs approach the property from Rolling Road next to West Springfield High School. That gets you to a dead end 600 feet from their driveway.

Ayr Hill Garden Club Plant Sale – May 12 The Ayr Hill Garden Club is sponsoring a plant sale in Vienna, Virginia, on May 12th from 9am-1pm. The **Becks** are planning to participate and would very much enjoy hearing from a few of our members who would be available to help with an early set-up that day and then with customer assistance during the open hours. Please let **Carolyn Beck** (703) 860-5676 know if you can spend a couple of hours with them during that event.

Green Spring Gardens (GSG) Sale – May 18/19 - The chapter will be participating in the Green Spring Gardens plant sale again this year. This sale is one of our two biggest fund raisers of the year. It is always a good time and a great venue for selling our beautiful azaleas and exposing our chapter and society to the general public. The first date is when we set up the stand and the second date is the sale date from 9am-3pm.

This event always requires volunteers to set up, tear down and to sell azaleas. **Joanne Neckel** is the volunteer coordinator for the chapter portion of the GSG Plant Sale on Saturday, May 19th from 9-3. Final preparation will start about 7:30; break-down usually takes about 30-45 minutes. Set-up will be on Friday with time dependent on the weather. If you are able to assist, please contact **Joanne** at (703) 690-6013 or vaneckel@verizon.net. Any time you have available would be most welcome.

White's Nursery Open House 20 May 9am – 5 pm - **Mike and Debbie White** will once again be having an open house at their nursery at 22531 Wildcat Road, Germantown, MD 20876. Please contact **Deb White** at (301) 471-5958 or whiteaz@verizon.net if you have questions or need additional information. Directions are available on their website www.whites-nursery.com.

NOTE: **Carolyn Beck** had put out an announcement about a workshop for building cold frames which was going to be held at **White's Nursery** this spring. Due to all of the other activities occurring in the spring, this workshop will be postponed to a date in the fall (to be announced at a later date).

Graham County 2018 Native Azalea Festival -15-16 June – A number of our chapter members have volunteered to protect and restore native azaleas on Hooper Bald over the past several years. Graham County North Carolina is using the restored bald as the centerpiece of their First Annual Graham County Azalea Festival 15-16 June in Robbinsville, NC. As part of the festivities, I will be presenting the town of Robbinsville with their Azalea City award.

If you are interested in attending the festival, you should book your lodging early. I will attach a flyer for the event to the email forwarding this message.

Calendar of Upcoming Events:

Below is the schedule for 2018. As always, events will be added (and rarely deleted) throughout the year:

Date	Event	Organization	Location
May 5/6	Member Garden Tours	NV-ASA	Various NOTE: PVC-ARS will also be conducting tours on these dates
May 12	Plant Sale (added)	Ayr Hill Garden Club	Vienna, VA
May 19	Green Spring Gardens Sale	Green Spring	Green Spring Gardens Park Alexandria, VA
May 20 9am – 5pm	White's Nursery Open House	Mike and Debbie White	White's Nursery 22531 Wildcat Road Germantown, MD 20876
May 20-27	ARS Convention	ARS	Bremen, Germany
June 14-16	Graham County 2018 Native Azalea Festival	Graham County, NC	Robbinsville, NC
July 15	Cutting Exchange	NV-ASA	Kirkwood Presbyterian Church Springfield, VA
Sep 15	Auction/Sale	NV-ASA	Kirkwood Presbyterian Church Springfield, VA
Oct 20	Executive Committee Meeting	NV-ASA	TBD
Oct 21	Fall Meeting w Speaker	NV-ASA	Kirkwood Presbyterian Church Springfield, VA
Dec 9	Holiday Social	NV-ASA	Beck's Home

Other Activities/Notes –

Miscellaneous –

Photos for *The Azalea Clipper*/Facebook – Barry is looking for pictures of your garden to share with other members on our chapter **Facebook** page and in the **Clipper**. Now is the time to show off a little. Send your pictures to **Barry** at bsperling@cox.net.

We are also always looking for articles for ***The Azalea Clipper***. They don't have to be long and can be on any azalea related subject (e.g., gardens (public or private), hybridizers, companion plants etc.). Pictures are also always appreciated. Please consider writing an article. Contact **Barry** if you have any questions bsperling@cox.net or 703-765-7062. **Clipper** articles can also be the basis for later submissions to ***The Azalean*** (see below).

The Azalean – The editors of ***The Azalean*** depend on member submissions of articles of interest to the general **ASA** membership. If you have an article to share, send it to them at theazalean@gmail.com. Articles should be

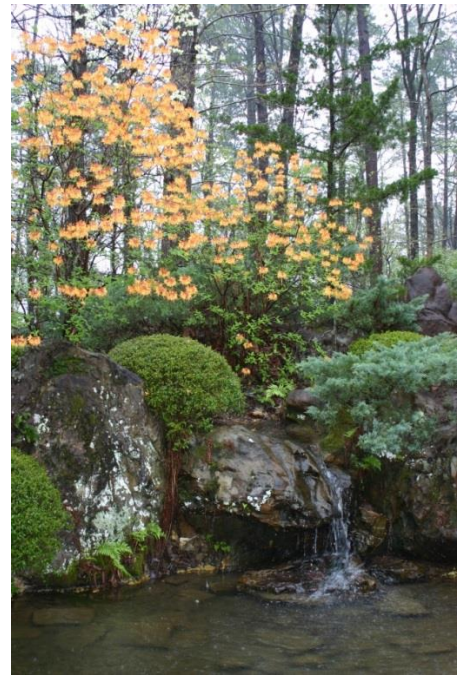
submitted as Microsoft Word documents. Illustrations are highly encouraged and should be at least 4 x 6 inches at 300 dpi.

Speakers – We continue to strive to provide speakers on topics of interest to our members. If you have heard, or are otherwise aware of, speakers who might be of interest to our chapter, please contact **Lars Larson** at lars.larson@cox.net or (703) 277-3441.

Susan and I will be in Germany the month of May for the ARS Convention and will miss the **Green Spring Gardens** and **Ayr Hill Garden Club** plant sales. I hope that many of you will be able to participate.

Rick

Additional Convention Photos are below.



Anthony Chapel Garvan Gardens and water feature in Garvan Gardens – photos C Beck



Entrance to Wood Garden - photo S. Bauer



Above – Barb Kirkwood inspects the snow covered azaleas in the Coleman Garden

Left – Larry Coleman in character outside of his Japanese Garden



Left – Stone Bridge in Garvan Gardens