

May 2026 Message to Members

Chapter Members,

This message is a little later than normal since I just returned from a six week long trip and my automation capabilities were less than I had expected. Someone must have notified Mother Nature that I was gone since I have about six weeks of weeding necessary in our garden! And, unfortunately, I missed the prime azalea blooms.

The chapter has been busy with maintaining the Klimavicz Legacy Garden, our spring plant sale at Meadowlark Botanical Gardens, a visit to the Takoma Park garden and last but not least, the annual ASA convention in Athens, GA.

We have just about finalized the signage for the Klimavicz Legacy Garden. **Barb Kirkwood** has been tenacious in keeping this action moving. We appreciate her efforts and those of **Jeff Hill** and the staff at Meadowlark. The major final effort in producing the signage was to get photos of the proper resolution for inclusion on the sign. We thank **Meghanne Sennott**, who took some beautiful photos of **Joe Klimavicz's** azaleas in his garden.

Finally, I'd like to thank **Paul** and **Carolyn Beck** for their continued efforts and contributions, especially in helping me get this message out.

Azalea Society 2026 Convention – Athens, Georgia by Carolyn Beck (photos by Carolyn Beck)

What a wonderful convention. And unique, in that it was planned and implemented by the ASA Board of Directors.

After the Board Meeting on Sunday afternoon there was a social hour where we got to reconnect with many people we had not seen for a year, followed by an entertaining and interesting presentation by **Todd Lasseigne**, Executive Director of Bellingrath Gardens in Theodore, Alabama. He shared with us a little about the role azaleas have played in the past and how staff are working to significantly increase their presence in the future.



We're on the Web!
<https://www.nv-asa.org>



Convention Attendees at the State Botanical Garden of Georgia

Then there was a rush to the plant sale with robust purchasing of plants provided by **Ronnie Palmer, Shane Harris, Vivien Abney** of East Fork Nursery, Lazy K Nursery, and **Buddy Lee**.

Buddy Lee provided the convention favors. Encore Autumn Kiss is a reblooming semidouble bicolor with reddish-purple tints, darker at the margins and darker still on the center petals, 3-4' tall and wide, compact.



Kathy Jentz at the State Botanical Garden of Georgia

Monday morning we were treated to a guided tour of the State Botanical Garden of Georgia. The 10 cultivated acres are divided into many theme gardens (e.g., Children's, Bog, Threatened and Endangered Species, and the International Garden).

We particularly enjoyed the Asian Garden with its collection of azaleas.

In the afternoon we visited White Oak belonging to **Dale Berrong**. This 225 acre garden is located on a substantial hill. **Dale** explained what preparations had been done (thinning trees, installing irrigation), what areas had been planted, and future goals. The focus of the garden is on azaleas, both evergreen and deciduous, along with camellias and the Ironclad rhododendrons.

On Tuesday we went to four gardens. **Dr. Michael Dirr** has a degree in Plant Physiology and, among other positions, was a Professor at the University of Georgia and in charge of the Georgia Plant Introduction Program. Many of these introductions were featured in his garden and **Dr. Dirr** explained the attributes of these impressive plants. He has authored numerous books, well worth reading.

The garden of **Susan** and **Todd Floyd** is amazing, very diverse and well presented. All of the many deciduous azaleas were numbered and a handout provided to tell us the name of the cultivar and the hybrid group.

Dr. Alan Armitage was a Professor of Horticulture at the University of Georgia. His garden abounds with many types of plants, many of which he introduced, and **Dr. Armitage** shared the story behind many of them. He has authored many texts that are most informative.

Ram Giberson has an extensive and very eclectic garden with many water features. The excellent buffet dinner was held at the Athens Country Club. During the meeting, awards were presented to **Aaron Cook** for the best article in *The Azalean* for 2026, with Distinguished Service Awards to **Dr. Sandra McDonald** and **Joe Klimavicz**.

Aaron extended an invitation to attend the 2027 ASA Convention in Hendersonville, NC, April 25th – 28th.

The speaker for the evening was **Charlie Andrews**. He shared a lot of information on Georgia's azalea hybridizers: **Ralph W. Pennington, James Harris, John Kohli, Earl Sommerville,** and **George and Mary Beasley**.

More pictures of this convention are at the end of this message and on the ASA Facebook page.

Klimavicz Legacy Garden Workday 21 April



David Meadows and Hiep Pham work the soil - photo C. Beck

Our first workday of the season in the Klimavicz Legacy Garden (KLG) at Meadowlark Botanical Gardens was Tuesday, April 21st.

The primary focus was preparing the ground for segments 4 and 5 of KLG Section B. We dug large holes, removed rocks, and added 2 cubic feet of pink bark to each. We also did some weeding. We thank the volunteers who came out to support this effort - **Hiep Pham, David Meadows, Ralph Habegger, Leo Garcia, Paul and Carolyn Beck.**

Chapter Plant Sale – Meadowlark Botanical Gardens 25 April

The chapter had a very successful spring plant sale at Meadowlark Botanical Gardens. Though it was a cold, grey and windy day, it fortunately did not rain. This sale is the major fund raiser for the chapter.

We sold a total of 107 plants for \$2438 revenue:

- 81 separate sales
- 4 Japanese maples donated by **Dave Nanney**, for \$25 each.



Customers with Barb Kirkwood and Joe Klimavicz – photo C. Beck

- 48 deciduous, \$1290
- 55 evergreen, \$1048
- One \$100 donation
- \$82 in member discounts
- \$60 for two membership renewals

We thank **Barb Kirkwood, Bill Miller, Lars Larson, Joe Klimavicz, Dave** and **Leslie Nanney** and **Paul** and **Carolyn Beck** for their efforts to make this sale a success.



Lars, Barb and Bill display some of the beautiful plants available for sale - photo C. Beck

Patricia Elizabeth Cosby – 14 July 1926 – 1 April 2026

It's with great sadness that we pass along the news that chapter member **Elizabeth Cosby** passed away in April, three months away from her 100th birthday. **Elizabeth** was the seventh, and last surviving, of eleven children of **Roscoe Roy Cosby, Sr.**, and **Ida M. LaFratta Cosby**.

We met **Elizabeth** and her siblings **Madeline** and **Msgr. Roy** fourteen years ago when they purchased azaleas from the chapter.

Elizabeth became a member of the chapter and society and was a strong supporter of both.

Not only did the **Cosbys** purchase hundreds of plants over the years, they established a Legacy Garden of multiple Legacy varieties, they supported garden visits by the chapter (and many other groups) as well as the chapter sponsored 2016 Azalea Society convention in Williamsburg.

The **Cosbys** had a beautiful 79 acre property in Rockville, VA upon which they developed an extensive garden, primarily consisting of azaleas. An article on the **Cosbys** and their garden was published in the [Winter 2014-15 issue of *The Azalean*](#). The **Cosbys** left the garden as a living legacy by donating it to the Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden in Richmond.



l-r Madeline, Roy and Elizabeth Cosby in 2014

Elizabeth was gracious and generous. She will be greatly missed. Our condolences go to her family and to **Wes** and **Pam Morgan**, dear friends, who cared for them over the last fourteen years.

Azalea Society Convention 2028

Azalea Society conventions are typically sponsored by individual chapters. The society is approaching its 50th anniversary in 2029. The Northern Virginia chapter was one of the original chapters in the society, being formed in 1980.

The Chapter Executive Committee felt it would be a good idea to have the convention in the area where the society was founded. Additionally, the last time we had a convention in the Metro D.C. area was in 2009. We presented the proposal to the chapter at the meeting on the 22nd and there was agreement that we should sponsor the convention. The convention was approved by the Azalea Society Board of Directors during the recent convention.

The first phase of the convention is the planning phase. If you are interested in helping in this regard, please contact **Rick Bauer** at rickfbauer@gmail.com.

During the convention, we will need volunteers to help with such things as manning registration tables, being bus captains, helping with the plant sale, distributing box lunches etc. We hope you'll be able to assist at that time.

2026 Calendar of Upcoming Events

Date	Event	Organization	Location
June 6 or 13	Meadowlark pruning workshop	NV-ASA	Meadowlark Botanical Gardens
June (to be announced shortly)	Smoky Mountain Hikes	ASA	Smoky Mountains and other areas
12 July	Cutting Exchange w Speaker Rick Edwards	NV-ASA	Kirkwood Presbyterian
To be scheduled	Meadowlark Workday	NV-ASA	Meadowlark Botanical Gardens
October 18	Fall Meeting	NV-ASA	Kirkwood Presbyterian
To be scheduled	Board Meeting	NV-ASA	To be determined
6 December	Holiday Social	NV-ASA	Kirkwood Presbyterian

Other Activities/Notes –

Photos for *The Azalea Clipper*/Facebook – We are looking for pictures of your garden to share with other members on our chapter **Facebook** page and in the ***Clipper***. We are also always looking for articles for ***The Azalea Clipper***. They can be on any azalea related subject (e.g., gardens (public or private),

hybridizers, companion plants etc.). Please consider authoring an article. Contact **Rick Bauer** at rickbauer@gmail.com or 757-771-4446 if you have any questions.

The Azalean – The editor of **The Azalean** relies on member submissions of articles of interest to the general **ASA** membership. If you have an article to share, send it to theazalean@gmail.com. Articles should be submitted in Microsoft Word. Illustrations are highly encouraged and should be at least 4 x 6 inches at 300 dpi.

Additional Photos by **Carolyn Beck**, unless otherwise annotated



Laura Grant and Dale Berrong at Dale's garden



State Botanical Garden of Georgia



Carolyn Beck with Easter Parade (Mossholder) at the Floyd Garden – photo P. Beck



Conversation Piece (Robin Hill) at the State Botanical Garden of Georgia



Japanese maple and deciduous azalea at the Armitage garden



Country Cousin (Aromi) at the Floyd Garden



Jeb Stuart (Dodd Confederate Series) at the Floyd Garden



Solar Flare (Lee) at the Floyd Garden



Leo Garcia planting at the Klimavicz Legacy Garden



Deciduous and evergreen azaleas at the chapter plant sale at Meadowlark Botanical Gardens