



The Azalea Clipper

Northern Virginia Chapter, Azalea Society of America

Volume 31, Issue 3



Annual Azalea Cutting Exchange & Lunch (*Pot Luck*), *Membership*

*Meeting on
Sunday, July
11 at 12:00
Noon at the
residence of
Rod and Mary
Hoioos near
Stafford, VA -
Directions on
page four -*

Our next chapter meeting will be our annual cutting exchange on 11 July at 12:00 noon. This year, Rod and Mary Hoioos have graciously offered to let us meet at their home in Stafford overlooking the Potomac River. Their neighbor, Bonnie Pattie, another one of our chapter members, will show her garden. There will be a potluck lunch prior to the cutting exchange. Members should bring a dish to share. Directions to the Hoioos's are on page 4. Members are asked to bring lawn chairs with them.

Taking Cuttings

For those who have not been involved in taking and rooting azalea cuttings, (*and also for those who have done it many times*), guidance for this process is included on page three of this letter. A demonstration of the process will take place at the meeting.

From the President Eve Harrison

Hi Everyone,

It's been a long time since you received a note from me and so much happens in the gardening world during these hiatuses! A group of us went to Charlottesville to participate in a regional garden tour in mid April resulting in the sale of a large number of azaleas supplied by member propagator extraordinaire, Larry Martin. Our main goal had been to recruit new members but it seemed everyone wanted our azaleas so we nearly sold out of 100! We did gain two new members and hope that they can join together to attend some of our meetings, especially our "cutting picnic" in July where Lee and Carole McElvain always 'spoil' us by bringing their traditional yummy homemade ice cream and toppings! Member Fran Boninti welcomed us warmly and we hope to see more of her at some of our meetings/events.

In no time, Rick

(Continued on page 2)

Refreshment Duty—

For this meeting, the duty falls to those whose last names begin with the letters

A through Z

(Continued from page 1)

Bauer, Carolyn and Paul Beck and I journeyed to Maryland to select azaleas for the annual Blandy Arboretum Garden Fair sale where we used the two new tents we purchased with some of our fundraising money. To put it mildly, the weather was windy at Blandy, if not gale force at times, and participating members spent considerable time holding the tents down despite their concrete weights! It is always a wonderful event and we're considering doing it for a third year next year. We did recruit another new member there and recently have added a respectable number of new folks to our roles!

I do hope many of you who have never attended our cutting exchanges, turned 'cutting picnics', will attend this year. The setting alongside the Potomac River sounds peaceful and divine and we would so love to have ALL of you come! Larry Martin will do a demonstration of how he "sticks" cuttings and I can seriously vouch for his methods. My failure rate last year was one pot!!! There will be more cuttings than ever as our membership has grown so, with everyone bringing lots of different cultivars, you should all go home with more than enough to increase your azalea gardens.

This spring I've found myself searching through a wonderful book on azaleas and rhododendrons for answers to a few problems. Many years ago, 6 - I think, I reviewed this book for an article in The Azalean magazine and found it to be a great source of information on many levels of aspects of growing these ericaceous plants. Do yourself a huge favor and purchase "Success with Rhododendrons and Azaleas" by H. Edward Reiley, revised edition, soon.

Another recommendation I might add is to check out the online nursery, Meadowbrook We-Du, located in Marion, NC. While there returning from the New Orleans convention, we stopped in to meet Jamie Oxley and his wife since I had bought plants from them years before. They have a large collection of deciduous azaleas at very fair prices and they ship excellent plants.

Added thought: with the addition of deer fencing up here on the ridge we finally had a wonderful spring of blooms with no destroyed buds or plants and consequently have had a large number of folks coming up to "tour" the gardens. We were delighted to welcome Bob Stelloh and John Brown, past presidents of ASA and Ken Gohring, another azalea expert from the Oconee chapter for a wonderful visit while on their way to NY to the ARS convention in May. After their visit I was inspired to create a "mini-bald" area using most of my potted up deciduous azaleas from J and Lindy Jackson's nursery, Appalachian Native Plants, in TN as well as a number I'd grown from the seed exchange 2 years ago. Really cool! Growing from seed is plain fun and rewarding.

You'll be hearing more later on some decisions and recommendations made at the Executive Committee meeting held June 27; it was a really productive meeting held again at the home and gardens of Carolyn and Paul Beck. Their gardens are amazing and are always changing. Look for an opportunity in the next year for a chance to tour their wonderful finds.

I do hope to see lots of you July 11 on the Potomac at the Hoioos.

Eve

April 11 2010 Chapter Meeting

Don Hyatt gave a stunning presentation on Native Azaleas in his masterful use of Viewpoint. As you know, Don is a founding member of our chapter and spends lots of time seeking out the natives every year.

Rick Bauer gave a report on the recent National ASA Convention in New Orleans. The Virginia delegation had 19 representatives at the convention.

After this, an important business session followed to discuss and pass on the revised by-laws for the chapter. The current by-laws, as we know them, are the originals for the chapter and had been revised, but the revisions were not to be found. A new set had been prepared and approved by the executive committee. This new set had been distributed by email prior to the meeting and copies were also available for anyone who did not have same. The revised bylaws were approved by the members present.

There was also a plant exchange for everyone to enjoy.

**NEXT CHAPTER MEETING
IS ON SEPTEMBER 12TH
AT THE MERRIFIELD
NURSERY IN
GAINESVILLE, VA FOR
OUR ANNUAL CHAPTER
PLANT AUCTION. PLEASE
MARK THIS DATE.**

Azalea Cuttings Guidance

Taking Cuttings

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 leaves 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.

Rooting Medium

Any mixture of rooting material that is sterile, holds moisture, and is well aerated

should produce satisfactory results. One effective medium consists of 50% coarse sphagnum peat moss and 50% perlite by volume. After mixing thoroughly, wet it completely with plenty of water. Press out excess water after soaking has taken place. The container should be sterile when the medium is put in it. Cut-off milk or water jugs, sterilized flowerpots, or any plastic container may be used, as long as you can get several inches of medium depth and coverage by

A good time to take the cuttings is in the early morning. If drought conditions are present, water the plants well the evening before.

a plastic bag. The bag must be air tight to maintain the required 100% humidity on the rooted cuttings. Spraying the entire surface of the medium and the cuttings with a broad-spectrum fungicide will prevent mold and algae from growing on the surface.

Planting Cuttings

Prepare the cuttings for the rooting medium by stripping the leaves from the lower half of the cutting and pinching off the tip to prevent flowering and to foster branching. Dip the cuttings in a rooting hormone. If a liquid hormone is used, immerse cutting stems for 5 seconds. If the talc is used immerse to one inch and then tap to remove excess

material. Place the cuttings in the medium about two inches apart, and don't forget to label them!

Water the cuttings lightly after placing them to settle the medium around the roots. Since the sealed cover maintains 100% humidity, the cuttings do not need to be watered until roots develop. Place the container in good light, but not direct sunlight.

Best results are achieved when minimum time elapses between taking the cuttings and sealing them in the medium container. During this time, the cuttings should be kept in an atmosphere of 100% humidity as much as possible. After cuttings are placed in the medium, cover and seal the bag immediately, —don't let the leaves dry out.

After Cuttings Root

In a few months, new growth will appear on the cuttings as they develop roots. Open the bag a little at a time to harden off the new growth. Be sure to water during this time, the 100% humidity is gone. It is not necessary to remove them from the container just yet, you can let them grow until they begin crowding each other. They should have a good root structure by then. You can then remove them individually and pot them in four-inch pots for continued growth. Use a medium that drains well and is acid in nature, like peat moss or finely shredded pine bark.

Directions to the Meeting at Rod and Mary Hoioos

- ◆ From I95 get off at Exit 140. Head toward Stafford for 0.2 mile.
- ◆ When you get off of I95, you turn left on Courthouse Road if you're coming from the North. You turn right on Courthouse Road if coming from the south (in both cases you want to be heading towards Stafford).
- ◆ Turn LEFT onto VA-630/COURTHOUSE RD for 3.5 miles.
- ◆ Turn RIGHT onto ANDREW CHAPEL RD/VA-629 for 0.9 mile.
- ◆ Turn SLIGHT LEFT onto BROOKE RD/VA-608. Continue to follow BROOKE for 3.4 miles.
- ◆ Turn RIGHT onto MARLBOROUGH POINT RD. for 2.2 miles.

THE HOIOOS' RESIDENCE – 573 MARLBOROUGH ROAD, IS ON THE LEFT.

Go to a Tree

*When you grow weary, of the boasts of men
Go to a tree, my friend - one that has stood
Long, patient years within a silent wood.
A thing long lost, Trees are content to be
As God created them. No bough that turns
Its golden thoughts to Autumn ever yearns
Beyond a hillside's immortality.*

*Go to a tree in silence. You will find
In the soft eloquence of bud and leaf
Serenity beyond the voice of grief,
And faith above the reach of humankind.
Man spends his noisy days in search of gain
While trees find God in sunlight, soil and rain.*

Anderson M. Scruggs

The Azalea Clipper is published BI-monthly by the **Northern Virginia Chapter** of the **Azalea Society of America**. The officers of this Chapter are:

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