



The Azalea Clipper

Northern Virginia Chapter, Azalea Society of America

Volume 30, Issue 4



Bonsai Plants, *Dr. Joe Gutierrez*

We will hold our next chapter meeting on Sunday **November 1 2009**. The meeting will be held at the Pohick Regional Library. **Directions to the library are on page four.**

The speaker for this meeting will be Dr. Joseph E. Gutierrez, who has been a member of this chapter for a long time. His interest is primarily in bonsai – which he has been doing for 40 years! He principally likes to work with material that does well in this area, does not have sharp needles, and definitely has no thorns! Joe’s predilection is for collected material, so he has gone up to high elevations (especially love the Colorado Rockies) to close to the tree-line, and collect trees that are dwarfed and twisted by their growing location and the forces of nature. These include the Douglas fir and Ponderosa pines, as well as the Limber pines and Lodgepole pines. Most of the trees he has collected are in the 200 – 400 year-old range. Additionally, he loves working with azaleas and Japanese maples – both of which do very well in our climate here.

By profession, Joe is a physiologist, and general and vascular surgeon – now retired.

Refreshments will be available—please refer to the **Refreshment Duty** box to see if you need to bring something.

From the President *Eve Harrison*

It's been quite a while since you've heard from me, due primarily to scheduling problems involving getting a meeting together. But...the time has finally arrived and we're set to reconvene on Nov.1, as you'll see elsewhere in the Clipper. Meanwhile, several of the members have been exchanging emails regarding ideas for growing and retaining membership. We'll be forming a membership committee ASAP so if you're interested in helping to formulate new ideas in this area, please contact me or Rick Bauer. I think this will be very exciting since I've already heard some terrific thoughts on the subject! Others have had great ideas for more field trips and the possibility of coordinating plant sales and tours with the local ARS chapter. We need you to come to the meetings for *your* energy and ideas, too! And don't forget the great food!

(Continued on page 2)

*Meeting on
November 1st
at the Pohick
Regional
Library
1:30 PM
Directions on
page four*

Refreshment Duty—

For this meeting, the duty falls to those whose last names begin with the letters-
A through **J**



(Continued from page 1)

The inimitable Don Hyatt has once again come up with a fabulous idea for a field trip this fall. He has arranged for us to be a part of a group from the Mid-Atlantic chapter when they visit Acer Acres, growers of Japanese maples, on Nov. 6. This huge tree farm is located just off 95-S, south of Fredericksburg and West of Kings Dominion, near Madison. This is a trip you do not want to miss if you have even a mild interest in these wonderful trees! Bob and I made two trips down there this spring and picked up several terrific specimens at excellent prices. This is a wholesale nursery only but Don has arranged with Elizabeth Mundy, the owner, to sell to this group at probably slightly higher prices plus sales tax. The plants are excellent and her prices very fair, being \$32 for 3 gal and \$70 for 5 gal, wholesale. Contact Don at 703-241-5421 or at don@donaldhyatt.com for travel specifics. Incidentally, if you've never been to Colesville Nursery in Ashland just N. of Richmond, their plants and prices are excellent! Many of the Mid-Atlantic group will be visiting there as well.

In an attempt to simplify the dues process, many chapters are now collecting their annual dues (\$25) and are sending them to the national treasurer, our own Dan Krabill. So in the interest of trying to save money and time, feel free to begin sending in your dues now to Dan at 6009 Copley Lane, McLean, Va. 22101-2507, instead of waiting for renewal notices to arrive.

A party is on the horizon for Dec. 6 at Norma Merritt's home, the site of the previously cancelled party last December, due to the threat of icy weather. Eve-

ryone should bring their favorite dish with Norma providing drinks. She lives just south of the Wilson Bridge on the Maryland side. She has a grand piano and some of us can lead in singing carols so get those "pipes" warming up! Also, let's see how many dues renewals we can muster at that party. A "hat" will be provided to collect! Let's get the bragging rights to be the chapter with the most renewals in 2009! Feel free to bring guests who may have an interest in joining our fun group!

I realize this party collides with the Redskins' schedule; however, the month fills rapidly with other commitments and since we lost out on our party last year, we think it best to fit it in early, hopefully avoiding any bad weather. We promise to have a TV available for scores and highlights. We NEED a party after all that convention work! Come join us!

Let's hope we all got the predicted rain Oct. 15. I know my gardens are still thirsty after a very difficult 3 month drought. If you have any plants that need a boost for spring, this is the best time to give them some Holly Tone, a slow acting fertilizer that works over winter. If you're having trouble getting blooms and light isn't the problem, it could be some super phosphate will add what it needs to start budding again. I've found it really helpful with hydrangeas, rhododendrons and other acid loving plants.

My deciduous azaleas that I started from seed just 20 months ago are 13" high and potted up to gal pots now! Try this little experiment--I never dreamed I could grow a deciduous azalea in such a short period of time. It's really rewarding as well as great fun to

watch the little guys grow. Seeds are available through the seed exchange at our website, Azaleas.org.

See you Nov. 1 and put that PARTY on the calendar!

Eve

Dr. Gutierrez's Bonsai Comments

My first attempts were with chrysanthemums.. which can develop from a cutting to a woody plant in a year's time ...after many failures, I started to read as much as I could about bonsai .. and after making all the mistakes I thought it possible to make - I learned of a bonsai program at the Brooklyn Botanic Garden and studied with Frank Okamura, who was then the Curator of the bonsai collection there. I studied for about 3 years ...then moved on to study via workshops with Japanese/American bonsai masters in California...John Naka, Harry Hirao etc...Have also studied with Japanese masters: Masahiko Kimura, Saburo Kato etc...

I have lectured and given workshops and done demonstrations here in the U.S. as well as in South America...I continue to be active with the Northern Virginia Bonsai Society, and the Potomac Bonsai Association, and show trees annually at their shows. This year - at the Potomac Bonsai Association's first juried show, held in conjunction with their annual Bonsai Festival, I won first prize with my 400+ year old Douglas fir.

Joe

Preventing Winter Damage to Azaleas

(Excerpt from one of Art Frazer's articles reprinted by permission of Anita Frazer.)

Preventing winter damage is always better than trying to cure one, once it has happened. It is not always possible to prevent winter damage if we have an unusually severe winter. But a few simple rules will generally prevent such damage.

Plant shrubs and varieties that are known to be hardy in this area. Avoid the southern shrubs (especially azaleas) which are very lovely in the South – and which may survive one or two winters here – but a cold winter will surely wipe them out. Don't be confused –some of the azaleas grown in North Carolina and elsewhere are Kurume varieties and others are perfectly hardy here. It is the INDICA (Indian) hybrids which are so lovely in North and South Carolina (and Norfolk) that will not survive our winters here.

Plant only vigorous healthy shrubs. Plants from truck hucksters or wayside markets with loose and/or dried root balls have two strikes against them. A “bargain”, remember, has to be something worth more than you pay for it. Nursery bargains do not mean “cheap” plants. A sick, or unhealthy plant is a prime candidate for winter damage.

Any pruning and fertilizing should be done by now to avoid the stimulation of late tender growth.

Water regularly during summer if the rainfall is inadequate, to maintain vigorous healthy shrubs., and to minimize the stimulation of new growth caused by late wet weather following a drought period. Azaleas should have one inch of water every 10 days, either rainfall or watering. The fact that a shrub does not look like it is suffering from lack of moisture is not an acceptable standard. By the time leaves droop, or appear withered, and azalea has suffered the calamity of major shock.

If the late fall has been dry, it is especially important to water azaleas well in November and December before the ground (and root balls) freeze.

Mulching under azaleas is an excellent practice to conserve moisture and even out sudden changes in temperature. Keep and/or pick fallen deciduous leaves out of azalea branches. They can restrict air circulation and may cause some defoliation.

July 2009 Chapter Meeting

The previous meeting of this chapter was an azalea cutting exchange held at the George Mason Regional Library in Annandale, VA on July 12 2009. There were copious cuttings available, and everyone seemed to be happy with their packages of cuttings. Guidance for planting these cuttings was contained in the July Clipper. Some additional guidance is shown below.

AFTER CUTTINGS ROOT

The cuttings you took this summer should be producing roots at this time. You should see new growth coming along. 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 to crowd each other. They should have a good root structure by then.

Now you can remove them and pot them individually in four-inch pots for continued growth. Use a medium that drains well and is acid in nature, like peat moss and perlite with some finely shredded pine bark mixed in.



Upcoming Chapter Meeting

December 6 2009 “Holiday Party and Meeting”, at Norma Merritt's home in Maryland near the Wilson Bridge. Details will be provided in the next Clipper.

Please mark your calendars -

