



# The Azalea Clipper

Northern Virginia Chapter, Azalea Society of America

Volume 28, Issue 6



## December 2007

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*December 16  
2007--  
Holiday  
Social,  
1:00 to 4:00  
PM at Norma  
Merritt's Home  
in Fort  
Washington,  
MD-Directions  
on page four*

## Holiday Social Observance, *Membership*

This is a special meeting in the spirit of the approaching holidays. The main event will be “socializing with each other”, as we often do (sometimes extendedly) prior to our regular meetings. There will be a short business meeting, as Eve Harrison has some urgent business to get done. See her article on page two for more information. And, we will have refreshments.

The meeting will be at the home of Norma Merritt at 12211 Riverview Road in Fort Washington MD. Directions to her home are on page 3. We appreciate greatly Norma offering her home for this event.

Remember, this is an informal gathering and exchange of information among us all. Don't be bashful about bringing pictures, articles, or anything about your gardens or your gardening experiences. Maybe we all can learn from each other and end up

by having greater success in our future gardening activities.

For refreshments, we are asking each one to bring a dish to celebrate the holidays for a potluck meal. Bring hot or cold foods, salads, and desserts. Coffee and tea will be provided.

Watch for an announcement of our February 2008 meeting. Barry Sperling has arranged for Jean Beaudry to speak at this meeting. Time and place will be announced later.

# From the President

*Eve Harrison*

**"Happy holidays, everyone!"** Did we think the rains would *ever* come? Just as I was thinking of despair, they did come, at least to our ridge, and left us a glorious 2.1" in gentle fashion. I immediately began to plant some 34 azaleas from my "nursery bed" and installed a magnificent Alaskan Cedar down near the pond area! A Woodstock nursery had a one-day 1/2-price sale last week prior to moving to a new 10-acre location so we benefited greatly with the addition of our 9' cedar!

Hope you all have had enough rain to stick some bulbs in along with lots of azaleas and other plant material.

Don Hyatt has once again come to the aid of our chapter by driving up to Pa. to purchase the approved \$500 worth of 1-gallon deciduous azaleas in preparation for the convention. He and Carolyn Beck are generously repotting them to grow on into 2-gallon containers to offer for sale at the convention plant sale. Most are already budded but all definitely will be by May of 2009. Thank you again, Carolyn and Don, for giving so selflessly of yourselves to help better our chapter's endeavors.

Hope those of you who are growing cuttings from the July exchange have had good luck. Larry Martin came down

to see our gardens and advised me to offer more light, which I immediately did. Frances and Phil Louer also visited in October and advised me to loosen and remove the plastic bags covering them, as the extreme heat had helped develop enormous amounts of moisture in the pots. Turns out, with the advice of two long time members, that my cuttings are doing very well on their own now and I haven't lost very many.

Really hope many of you can visit next spring; it'll be my best since becoming a member 6 years ago. The move to this valley really interrupted the growth of vast numbers of plants but they have finally adapted here and are growing like mad, deer and vole visits notwithstanding.

I've spoken of voles before and the enormous damage they can do but I now report that getting a young kitten who was trained by an older "brother" has made a huge dent in the aforementioned population. Nearly everyday for months they turned up at the mudroom door as offerings for their mistress!

Please make plans to attend our now annual holiday party Dec. 16 this year. It will be at Norma Merritt's beautiful home on the Md. side of the Potomac River near the Wilson Bridge. Look for directions elsewhere in the Clipper. Everyone brings a dish and/or beverage, breads, etc. I'm sure you're all familiar with potluck dinners. I'll be bringing a ham again and we're expected at Norma's from 1-4 p.m. After lunch we'll have a brief business meeting mainly to have nominations for a new slate of officers for the coming year.

I'm happy to report that had we not had 6 regular members absent from our last meeting we would have had 26 folks at the last meeting in Sept. That is really growing and we're hoping more of you will return (starting Dec. 16) so you can participate in the preparations for the convention, not to mention our lively meetings, tours, auctions, etc.

See you at the party!

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

<b>President:</b>	Eve Harrison	(540)778-1945
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15800 Palmer Lane, Haymarket, VA 20169-1808.  
E-mail: [plouer@msn.com](mailto:plouer@msn.com)

## Report on September 30th Chapter Meeting

The Chapter met September 30<sup>th</sup> at the Tysons-Pimmit Hills Library.

Treasurer David Nanney reported that the plant auction held at the preceding meeting resulted in a substantial increase in funds available for the up-front costs of the 2009 ASA Convention.

With respect to future meetings, Norma Merritt offered to host a holiday season social get together and Vice President Barry Sperling said he had arranged for Jean Beaudry to speak at a meeting in February.

Barry noted that he was impressed with experiments in rooting cuttings as described by Mike Creel in the azalea email list beginning about 4 years ago and in two recent issues of *The Azalean*. He displayed samples of his success in using the dome-pot system but with tweaking to allow for the difference between the local climate and the 8A rating of Creel's home near Columbia, South Carolina. For his planting medium, Barry uses equal parts of perlite, fine pine bark, and Pro Mix plus some bark soil conditioner from Lowes.

Dan Krabill distributed a report on the status of planning for the 2009 convention. Members approved inviting Clarence Towe to be a featured speaker. They also approved a motion to spend \$500, subject to the recommendation of Barry Sperling and Don Hyatt, on getting deciduous azaleas from Jim Gears nursery.

Jane Newman,  
Secretary

## Let The Buyer Beware, *by Art Frazer*

Have you seen azalea plants in the stores lately already in full bloom? If not, you will see them over the next few months at holiday times, such as Valentines Day, and Easter being sold as short-term indoor enjoyment. While these may appear as a single plant, they are usually two or more azaleas planted together in the same pot. Some florist azaleas are produced essentially for this one-time display of flowers. Many of these (forced azaleas) are southern varieties which are not hardy outdoors in this climate.

However, you may find some azaleas in containers being sold locally for outdoor planting that are planted two together in the container. This can be a misrepresentation to the unsuspecting customer who is shopping for vigorous plants that will grow into healthy well-formed shrubbery. When two small azaleas have been planted together in a small container, then grown together for a season or more in such a confined space, and sold as "one plant", the customer is short changed in three ways.

1. What appears to be a well-formed fully branched azalea maybe six years old is in truth two small crowded and sparsely formed three or four year old plants. In azaleas, two small ones do not equal a large one.
2. If planted in the ground together (as they are in the container) by the customer, neither root system would have sufficient room to develop properly, and the branches and foliage would suffer both from stunted roots and from crowding.
3. Because the roots from two small plants have tried to develop in the confined space of a container designed for only one plant, it is inevitable they are intertwined. Separating these to plant them individually can involve drastic damage to the tender roots, especially for younger plants, and could result in major shock if they survive. It could take a year or more for them to recover their growth and to fill out the lopsided branches caused by overcrowding them together in one container.

In any event, it is a case of "two for the price of one" being no bargain. It is sad to think that, even in azaleas, you must look closely to be sure what you are getting.

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*The above article is a paraphrasing of an article published by Art Frazer in their Columbia Nursery Newsletter in 1970. Permission obtained from Anita Frazer.*

## Directions to Norma Merritt's Home

- ◆ Take Capital Beltway south of Alexandria to cross the Potomac River on Woodrow Wilson Bridge.
- ◆ Immediately after crossing the river, turn right on the Indian Head Highway.
- ◆ After 4.1 miles (fifth traffic light), turn right on Fort Washington Road for 0.8 miles.
- ◆ Turn right on Riverview Road and bear left after 0.9 miles.
- ◆ Proceed on Riverview Road parallel to the river for another 0.9 miles.
- ◆ Turn right on the dirt road at mailboxes for 0.2 miles to Merritt home on the right at river's edge.
- ◆ The address is 12211 Riverview Road. Phone 301-292-3233 if lost and need help.

### Azalea Society Membership

We all know what it is like to receive a chapter dues notice, lay it aside, and then either forget to pay or think we have paid. Membership in the ASA runs from January to December each year, and dues notices were sent to members last October. **If you have not renewed your membership, please send in your payment as soon as possible. The Society Treasurer is Daniel Krabill. His address is below:**

6009 Copley Lane  
McLean VA, 22102

We can transmit this newsletter to you via email in pdf format at a considerable savings to the chapter treasury. If you want to receive it by email, please advise me at the following address with your correct email address.

plouer@msn.com

If you received this letter by email you do not need to take any action.