

July 2006



The Azalea Clipper

Northern Virginia Chapter, Azalea Society of America

Volume 27, Issue 3

Annual Azalea Cutting Exchange, Membership

The annual Azalea Cutting Exchange affords those attending to add to their azalea collections with new varieties selected from the azalea gardens throughout this area (and who doesn't want to add to their collection?).

The plan is to meet about noon at Eve and Bob Harrison's home near Luray, Virginia. We will have lunch and proceed with the cutting exchange afterwards. *(Please note the time change from our usual meeting.)* The travel time is about two hours, so you need to plan accordingly. See directions on page three.

For refreshments, we are asking each one to bring a vegetable, salad, or dessert dish for a potluck meal. Bring hot or cold foods,. Water and iced tea will be provided.

See the following note on taking cuttings and preparing them for the exchange.

Please try to come to this meeting with your cuttings. Bring a friend who is ready to start collecting, and RSVP the Harrison's.

July 2006						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					



Guidance for Azalea 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

(Continued on page 3)Cuttings

*July 9th at
the home of
Eve and
Bob
Harrison
at
12:00 noon
EDT
Directions
on page 3*

**PLEASE BE KIND ENOUGH TO RSVP
EVE OR BOB IF YOU WILL ATTEND
PHONE 540-778-1945
bobnpvine@earthlink.net**

From the President

Dan Krabill

On Sunday, July 9 we will have our annual cuttings exchange at the home of Eve and Bob Harrison near Luray, Virginia. I encourage you to try to arrange with a friend to carpool to the meeting. If you want a ride and cannot think of anyone to call, feel free to call me or email me, and I will try to arrange it (my number and email address are in the next paragraph). Thank you to the Harrison's for hosting us once again, the other time having been two years ago I believe at their previous home in West Virginia. I assume that we can twist Eve's arm and get her to give us a garden tour. In fact, I suspect that we would have a very hard time talking her out of giving us the tour.

These exchanges provide all of us with the opportunity to acquire additional azaleas for our gardens, many of which are hard to find and all of which are free. These tiny sticks can and will grow into beautiful, large azaleas with a small amount of effort and a little time. Please come, especially if you are a new member and do not have many azaleas large enough to provide cuttings. If there are any varieties you particularly want, please call me some evening at 703-534-7441 or send me an email at dkrabill@securagroup.com. I will try to find someone to provide those varieties. We will provide assistance at the meeting on rooting techniques.

For those bringing cuttings, I have had my best success in terms of percentage rooted when the cuttings have been taken in the morning from plants that have been rained on or watered recently. Given that I am writing on June 26 after a day of more than 5 inches of rain and during a day of steady rain, it is hard to imagine anything needing to be watered. Small plants, such as extra rooted cuttings from last year's exchange, are also welcome.

We were treated to our annual display of beautiful azaleas this spring. This year was unusual in that most of the early azaleas bloomed 10 days to 2 weeks earlier than in most previous years. I got my first bloom, on the kurume azalea Flame, on April 7. The mid-season blooms were also early, although the fun stopped for a while around May 10 when we got a heavy dose of petal blight. The satsukis and other June-blooming azaleas seem to have bloomed at their normal times and some are still in bloom as I write this on June 26.

I am very pleased to have attended the ASA/ARS Joint Convention in and around Rockville, Maryland on May 13 and 14, along with quite a few members of our chapter. The plant sale was great, particularly since it included azaleas hybridized by Joe Klimavicz, Bob Stewart, Don Hyatt, George Ring, and Pete Vines, all present or former members of our chapter. Thanks to our own Don Hyatt, co-chairman of the convention while wearing his ARS hat, for

a job very well done. The only blight on the convention was that the garden tours did not take place a week or two earlier, when more azaleas were in bloom and before the petal blight hit.

I look forward to seeing you on July 9.

Dan Krabill, President

Previous Chapter Meeting April 2, 2006

The April 2nd 2006 meeting of the chapter was held at the Green Spring Gardens Park.

President Krabill reported on preparations thus far for hosting the 2009 ASA national Convention. Don Hyatt and Phyllis Rittman discussed activities and lessons learned in organizing the forthcoming joint ASA/ARS Convention. They recommended chapter planners designate a committee secretary and treasurer. Rosie Field volunteered to take on the secretary assignment and Phyllis volunteered for the treasurer.

The speaker for the day apparently had the wrong date, so she did not appear. The group then participated in discussing their experiences in raising azaleas for the remaining time.

Jane Newman, Secretary

(Continued from page 1) *Cuttings*

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.

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 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.

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

Some azalea growers have variations on the above process with different levels of success. Come to the meeting and hear about some of these, maybe another process would work better for your situation.

NEXT CHAPTER MEETING WILL BE OUR
ANNUAL PLANT AUCTION ON AUGUST
27, 2006
AT PHRAN'S AZALEA TRAILS (THE
LOUER'S) HAYMARKET, VA

DIRECTIONS TO EVE AND BOB HARRISON'S HOME—

- ◆ Take **I 66W** to Linden exit. Turn left and go to light and right onto **55** toward Front Royal (5 miles).
- ◆ Go through the lights until you **dead-end on 340 and turn left** to go south.
- ◆ Luray is some **23 miles** South.
- ◆ Go into Luray, avoiding the 340 by-pass. Go through the town (one minute) and follow 340 S. 7 miles to the **Hawksbill Diner** and the left.
- ◆ **Turn left** and follow curvy road to stop sign.
- ◆ **Turn left** and then right back to the right onto **Pine Grove Road**. We're 3.8 miles down on the right between white board fences **#3598**.
- ◆ The driveway is 3/8 mile and steep but just hold on and you'll make it.
- ◆ Parking is past house on left between the barn and the house as well as on past the barn along both sides of the drive. We'll try to have all the burdock weeds hacked down by then so you won't be swallowed by them!

Eve recommends your bring a wide brim hat or bug spray, the gnats are extra hungry up there.

If lost, call 540-778-1945

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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Northern Virginia Chapter,
Azalea Society of America



Frances Louer, Corresponding Secretary
15800 Palmer Lane
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NEXT MEETING,
SUNDAY JULY 9TH
12:00 NOON EDT
ANNUAL AZALEA
CUTTING EXCHANGE
