

August 2003



The Azalea Clipper

Northern Virginia Chapter, Azalea Society of America

Volume 24, Issue 4



Annual Azalea Plant Auction, Membership

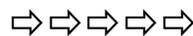
Our annual azalea plant auction will be held again at the home of Dave and Sharon Raden on Sunday August 24th at **1:30 PM EDT**.

Our plant auction provides an excellent opportunity to expand your collection of azaleas at very modest prices. It is a particularly good opportunity for those new to growing azaleas, and for those who may have only a few varieties. As such, it is a good meeting to invite guests who are also looking for special azaleas grown by Society members.

Also, if there is a member of another chapter you would like to invite, or a member of our chapter whom you have not seen for a while, please give them a call and encourage them to come.

In any event, don't forget to bring several plants, particularly new or unusual varieties that others may not know or have. If you do not have plants to bring, by all means come anyway.

There will be refreshments as usual. *Please check the Refreshment Duty notice to the right to see if you should bring some goodies to eat.* ☺



**NEXT CHAPTER
MEETING—
OCTOBER 5 2003
TO BE ANNOUNCED**

From the Pres *Barry Sperling*

It's great when so many people volunteer their time and energy to making the club what it is. We don't even think about how Phil and Frances Louer put out this Clipper 6 times a year. It just appears by magic. And Dan Krabill sets up the meetings and their programs. After all, it's what we expect.

But others are putting in time to help out. Remember Larry Martin's work to make the Pete Vines reference manual a reality? You may not have known that Don Voss and Don Hyatt put in a long Saturday scanning Don V's Robin Hill slides for the creation of a CD for us all. There is still a lot of work to be done, but it is well under way and may be a reality before the year is out. Valerie Lorenz has volunteered to write up a guide to the varieties of plants that a beginner may look forward to. This should be made available as a handout (with our name and contact info on it) to garden centers around the area for inclusion with plant sales next spring. Bruno Kaelin spent a LONG time on the phone with me answering my many questions about his approach to soils, for inclusion in a write-up I hope to do next winter.

In less than 5 years we will be
(Continued on page 2)

**August 24th
at Dave and
Sharon
Raden's
Gardens
1:30 P.M.
EDT**

August 2003

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						

REFRESHMENT DUTY —

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



Q through Z

For the October 5th meeting, names beginning with **A through J** will have the responsibility.

(Continued from page 1)

sponsoring the national convention. Too far away to think about? Joe Klimavicz doesn't think so, and he'll be helping us to get our priorities straight as we begin to structure all of the work that needs to be done.

I'm sure I'll be embarrassed when I remember some people that I worked with recently that I forgot to mention. Oh, that's right: Alice Pearson makes sure our coffee; snacks and utensils

are set out for us. You DID offer to help her clean up, right? And Lee McElvain sends in notices to the papers and keeps the meeting notes, and...

Volunteer organizations like ours work because of people like the above. If you have an idea that you could put some time into, let us know and we'll see who could help!

Barry

Be sure to reserve the following Sundays in 2003 for Chapter meetings:

October 5th @ 1:30 PM EDT

November 23rd @ 1:30 PM EST

Last Chapter Meeting Notes, *Lee McElvain, Secretary*

What a wonderful time everyone had at Frances and Phil Louer's "Phran's Azalea Trails" on July 13, 2003. It was a lovely day for an outing and their huge collection of azaleas made an outstanding backdrop for the cutting exchange, planting demonstration, and socializing while refreshments were enjoyed.

The business meeting was short. President Barry Sperling announced that Don Voss and Don Hyatt are preparing a compact disk highlighting Robin Hill azaleas and other information that will be available to members when the project is completed. He also noted that he had copies of Pete Vines' catalog available for members. In addition, he mentioned the possibility of working with Fairfax County Parks on an educational project concerning azaleas and with local nurseries regarding distribution of an informative fact sheet concerning azaleas. (Volunteers are needed for these projects.) Brief mention was made of the minutes, as printed in the last Clipper, and they were approved.

When the meeting adjourned, refreshments were enjoyed while attendees roamed the

garden, visited, or looked over the large selection of cuttings available for the exchange. Then the key purpose of the meeting proceeded with the selection of cuttings - everyone who wished had an opportunity to select a dozen bags or so filled with healthy azalea slips.

After selections were made, Don Hyatt showed his method for "sticking" azalea cuttings. During this demonstration, other experienced growers volunteered their tips and others had an opportunity to ask questions or get help with problems that they had experienced. Then those wanting guidance adjourned to start some of their selected cuttings in pots filled with medium that Don had prepared in advance. This allowed everyone to get some "hands on" experiences with the procedures before going home to finish up their "new azalea babies". It was an enjoyable and informative experience - THANKS, Don.

At the risk of leaving something out, the following is a summary of the steps one should take to successfully convert small cuttings into clones of the parent plant: (Also see Don's instructions on page 3)

Cutting medium should be a

mixture of equal parts of peat moss, perlite, and sand thoroughly moistened, but not wet. If the medium is too wet, the plants are likely to rot. No fertilizer should be used at this stage. Do not pack the medium too tightly in the pot.

The cuttings should not be too long (thin stems seem to be preferred over thick ones) and the soft end tip should be removed. Before "sticking" the cutting, the lower leaves on the stem should be removed (leaving just a few at the top) and the base end should be lightly dusted with a rooting hormone. It is advisable to use a pencil to push a hole in the medium, place the cutting in the depression and firm slightly around it. Plant 1" (or less) deep since the roots grow close to the surface.

Before sealing them in a plastic bag, it is a good idea to lightly spray each pot with Isotox and a fungicide mixture (like "rose pride fungicide). Allow that moisture to dry off the leaves before closing. Do not fertilize.

The plants can be left over winter 10-12° below ordinary fluorescent lights, perhaps opening occasionally to see if everything looks ok. Do not over-water. If they root earlier, they may be pot-

(Continued on page 4)

Don Hyatt's Instructions

(Continued from page 2)

ted up (maybe as early as December), but they cannot go out until warmer weather returns. Acclimate the tender plants by slowly exposing them to some air before potting up.

Evergreen cuttings can be taken just about anytime, but deciduous azaleas should be started in June to root earlier, since they will lose their foliage. Promote root growth by leaving the lights on longer. Rhododendron cuttings are treated basically the same, except the cutting should be wounded with a knife on two sides of the stem and the leaves retained should be reduced to half their size.

When re-potting, add pine bark fines to your cutting medium. Keep moist, but not wet.

Lee McElvain, Secretary

Directions to the Dave and Sharon Raden's Home

- From the Beltway in Virginia, turn west on Little River Turnpike, route 236.
- Turn right at the very first street, Lake Boulevard, at the entrance of Mill Creek Park.
- Continue 1.0 mile to the last house on the right – 3801 Lake Blvd.
- Park on the road in front of the house.

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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**Next Chapter Meeting -
August 24th, 1:30 PM
Azalea Plant Auction**