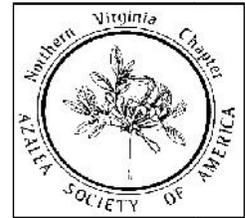


# The Azalea Clipper

Volume 32 Issue 1 March 2011

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Northern Virginia Chapter Azalea Society of America



NEXT  
CHAPTER MEETING:

**MARCH 20**  
CENTREVILLE LIBRARY

"Garden Flow" with  
Karen Rexrode

REFRESHMENT DUTY –  
"L" THROUGH "Z"



Viewing photos in the winter remind us why we anticipate spring (Bob Stewart's 2-97 and 14-96).

## Join The Fun!

Our next chapter meeting will be held at the Centreville Library on Sunday, March 20<sup>th</sup> from 1:30 until 4:30 pm. **Karen Rexrode**, will be talking with us about "**Garden Flow**". This is the exploration of garden lures; curves, mass, and the mystery that might make your garden a place that people will want to enter. The topic was developed after Karen found that some gardens had a presence of place combined with a strong draw to discover. She has tried to solve the psychological and physical aspects of this lure.

Karen is the founder and former owner of Windy Hill Plant Farm in Aldie, Virginia. She currently works at the historic Oak Hill estate, which was once the home of President Monroe. Besides teaching and lecturing, Karen enjoys photography.

Directions to the library can be found on page 4. The facility opens at 1:00 and closes at 5:00 on Sundays.

After the presentation, we will have another of our wonderful **plant exchanges**. So please bring a few special things from your garden to share. A

**description** and a **picture** of your contribution will help the new owner provide just the right home for their acquisitions. Information might include:

- Name of the plant, scientific and common
- Hybrid group
- Plant size (height and width) at about 10 years or at maturity
- Flower color, size, type, bloom time
- Fragrance, when applicable
- pH preference
- Light and water requirements
- Zones in which the plant usually thrives
- When to divide or prune
- Country of origin (e.g. native to Northern Virginia; discovered in Korea)
- Notes (e.g. deer resistant)
- Picture of plant
- Name of person contributing the plant

Please make certain that all your plants are tagged. Also, they should not be overly wet, as we do not want any water damage at the library.

**Carolyn Beck**

***From the President***

We're beginning to commence a new year for the Northern Virginia Chapter. I'm hoping that the worst of the winter is behind us and that we can finally get back into our gardens.

As you are probably all aware, the chapter elected a new slate of officers at our December Holiday Social. I'd like to thank those officers who served last year. It takes a lot of work to plan and implement chapter activities and we appreciate those who volunteer to serve as chapter officers or heads of committees. I'd like to give a special thanks to **Eve Harrison** who served as President for four years and instituted..or reinstated many interesting activities for our members.

I'm excited about the program we have for the chapter this year. We're continuing to implement new and interesting activities for our members. Two of the new additions this year are the **Charlottesville** garden visit 13-14 April and a visit to the **National Arboretum** on 26 April. We are holding our plant sale at **Green Springs Garden** on May 14<sup>th</sup> this year as it is closer than Blandy (where we have held our sales in

2008/10) and will hopefully help generate new memberships from the local community.

Additionally, we're looking to collaborate with other plant societies and ASA chapters to widen the variety of activities for our members. We have two activities this year in conjunction with the ARS. The first, a plant trip to NC nurseries was held earlier this month. In the October we are invited to join ARS at **Hooper Bald**.

Good communications are key to the success of any organization. We continue to produce the Clipper newsletter, however we are supplementing that with monthly email messages to members, supplemental mailings where necessary and monthly updates to our webpage <http://www.nv-asa.org/>. The latter is especially useful for conveying last minute changes. I encourage you to visit the site.

The quality of the programs offered by the chapter depends on input from our membership, both ideas and effort. We're always open to both. If you have any suggestions or other input, please contact **Carolyn Beck** or me. I'm looking forward to seeing you in the coming year.

**Rick**

**Look at my Picasa page of club photos. Many recently added!**

***<https://picasaweb.google.com/bsperlin/AzaleaMeetings2001>***

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***Please volunteer to be a host for our next cutting exchange and holiday party!***

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***Changing email, home address, phone?? Please let me know.***

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***Carolyn suggests bringing a recipe with your dish!***

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***Did you know that we're alive in cyberspace? Check us out at: [www.azaleas.org/nv.html](http://www.azaleas.org/nv.html)***

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***If you would like to receive the clipper via email, saving the club printing and postage, and are not already, please send me a note.***

## **Money and Death: a Political Thriller**

Politics is mostly about money and here in DC, the heart of politics, a thriller was played out over the last 4 months. The lives of about 25% of the famous, mature azaleas on the **National Arboretum's Mt. Hamilton** were threatened by their administrators as the azalea community fought back with letters and emails, newspaper articles and TV news bits. Congressmen and Senators were contacted and they passed on the concerns to the US Department of Agriculture, of which the NA is a (small) part. The azalea email list played a significant role in mobilizing the troops and keeping them updated as the playing field shifted over time.

First to raise the alarm was **Aaron Cook**, ASA President, who was in discussions with the NA: "The rumors are true. I just got off the phone with **Scott Aker**, the Unit Garden Leader for the National Arboretum. Beginning in the summer of 2011 a large number of azaleas on the Mt. Hamilton hillside will be cut down and the stumps treated with herbicide." Aker then wrote to **Ron Rabideau** of Rarefind Nursery: "Recently, we learned that a donor that has supported two gardener positions on our staff will no longer be providing that support, and the loss of this staff has resulted in the need to deaccession collections. We will be deaccessioning our **National Boxwood Collection** and the co-located **Perennial Collections** as well as the **Glenn Dale Hillside** portion of the Azalea Collection." As was pointed out, though, the gardener positions were funded from outside the Arboretum's finances and for other areas than the azaleas. In acknowledging the popularity of the plants Aker said: "...we are now unable to accommodate the crowds of visitors in April and May when the azaleas are in bloom. We have inadequate parking and restroom facilities."

As the winter trudged onward and the opposition rose, justifications for the destruction changed (and the destruction would not be cheap - labor for cutting them down, painting the stumps, tearing them out and replanting with something else to avoid erosion would be a significant expense. Note that many of the plants had survived uncared-for prior to the enthusiastic work of **Barbara Bullock** and her retinue of volunteers.) At one point **Ramon Jordan**, Interim Associate Director of the NA said that Aker's reasons were not really true and hadn't been approved. Through it all, they maintained that the plants were unknown and unlabeled. It was true that they were unlabeled, but the unnamed **Ben Morrison** hybrids were in groups with labels which designated their parents. The loss of this germplasm which supported the development of the **Glenn Dales** would be severe.

Along the way **Adrian Higgins** wrote an article about the destruction for the Post, **Don Hyatt** appeared in a long interview with Hearst TV and even **Tony Kornheiser** gave the azaleas a sympathetic hearing on his sports radio show!

Finally, in February, an **anonymous donor gave \$1 million to the Friends of the National Arboretum** specifically to use the interest accrued for the maintenance of the azaleas. Jordan has agreed to put the destruction on hold **for now**, pending discussions with stakeholders. So was the threat just a ploy to get money from the community? Did the ploy work? This is Washington ...

The End ???

Barry

### **Note:**

I've left out tons of information in the above, so to fill in the gaps see **Steve Henning's** site: <http://savetheazaleas.org>  
which includes Don's original rebuttal to Aker's statement:  
<http://savetheazaleas.org/#anchorHYATTRESPONDS>

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**Contact Dave Nanney if you'd like to borrow a book from the club library.**

**President: Rick Bauer**

**Vice President: Carolyn Beck**

**Secretary: Mary Hoiios**

**Treasurer: Paul Beck**

**Corresponding Secretary and Clipper Editor:  
Barry Sperling**

*March 4-6 ARS Plant trip to NC Nurseries*

*March 20 Chapter Meeting, Centreville*

*April 13-14 Charlottesville Garden Tours*

*April 26 Nat. Arboretum's Tour & Demon.*

*April 28 - May 1 ASA Convention, Evansville, IN*

*May 14 Green Spring Gardens Plant Sale*

*July 10 Cutting Exchange*

*September 11 Plant Auction*

*October ? Fall Meeting*

*October 8 - 10 Hooper Bald Project*

*December 4 Social*

**Centreville Regional Library 14200 St. Germaine Dr., Centreville 703-830-2223**

**Traveling WEST on Rt. 66 from east of Centreville, proceed past Exits 53A and 53B, marked "Centreville," taking Exit 52. Come down the Exit 52 ramp, and get in the left turn lane. Left at light onto Rt. 29. Go under Rt. 66 and turn Right at 2nd light: Machen Rd. Library at intersection with St. Germaine.**

**Traveling EAST on Rt. 66 take Exit 52 and stay right. Turn on "Rt. 29 North" and proceed as above.**

**From FAIRFAX, take Rt. 29 South about 6 mi and at Centreville, past Rt. 28, turn Left at Machen Rd., then to intersection with St. Germaine.**

**From MANASSAS, take Rt. 28 North and turn left at Machen Rd., then as above.**

**From CHANTILLY, right on Rt. 29, left on Machen Rd., then as above.**

**No. VA Chapter, ASA**

**Barry Sperling, Corresponding Secretary  
7732 Schelhorn Rd., Alex., VA 22306**