

July 18 Message to Members

Chapter Members,

June has been another busy month. From an azalea standpoint the highlight was the **Graham County Native Azalea Festival** in Robbinsville, NC as well as the annual Smoky Mountain hikes.

Graham County Azalea Festival

Many of you know that for the last ten years, members of the ASA and the American Rhododendron Society (ARS), along with others, have participated in efforts to restore the native azaleas on **Hooper Bald** in the Nantahala National forest of North Carolina. These efforts included removing competitive species and planting native azaleas on the Bald. **Jim Brant** from the Vaseyi Chapter and **George McLellan** from the Northern Virginia Chapter were the personnel coordinating the efforts of countless volunteers (as well as putting in a lot of sweat equity themselves). **Jim Brant** was recognized by the U.S. Forest Service last year when he was presented with an award in the Restored & Resilient Landscapes category for spearheading the effort.

Several ASA members were present for the festival and other events. Besides **Susan** and myself we were joined by ASA Vice President **Charlie Andrews**, ASA Past President **Buddy Lee** and his wife **Dixie**, ASA Past President (and current Vaseyi Chapter president) **J Jackson** and his wife **Lindy Johnson**, Vaseyi members **Jim** and **Pam Brant** and **Joe** and **Jan Nicholson** (also President of the Azalea Chapter of the ARS), Ben Morrison Chapter member **Joe Miller** and his friend **Halit Kardak** and Northern Virginia Chapter Members **Don Hyatt** and **George McLellan**.

Thursday evening several of us got together for dinner at the Tapoco Lodge, a historic site named for the Tallahassee **Power Company** which



Dinner at Tapoco Lodge, from l - r Charlie Andrews, Rick Bauer, J Jackson, George McLellan, Don Hyatt, Halit Kardak, Joe Miller, Lindy Johnson, Susan Bauer and Jan and Joe Nicholson



Calendulaceum on Hooper Bald

built the nearby Cheoah dam. It is a beautiful site along the Cheoah River.

Friday was focused on **Hooper Bald** with tours of the bald provided by society members and volunteers from the **Partners of Joyce Kilmer-Slickrock Wilderness** who also worked hard to improve the trail leading to the bald.

Friday evening a reception was held at the Stecoah Valley Center a wonderful facility housed in the former Stecoah Union School which was opened in 1926. Food and drink were plentiful, and this was followed by an award ceremony. The Azalea Society of America presented the town of Robbinsville, NC/Graham County

with the Azalea City Award in recognition of their efforts to promote azaleas. ASA Distinguished Service Awards were given to **Jim Brant, George McLellan** and **J Jackson** and **Lindy Johnson** for their work in promoting azaleas and supporting the ASA.

Saturday was the festival held near the Graham County Courthouse. There were a number of vendors with different types of food, plants and other items to sell. The ASA also manned a membership booth. The azaleas were very popular items and sold out early. I'm sure they'll have a bigger supply next year.

I hope this was the first of many festivals. I'm excited about some of the ideas put forth to beautify the town of Robbinsville with azaleas in addition to maintaining **Hooper Bald**. They are certainly located in a beautiful part of the country.



Some of the Azalea Festival tents in front of the Graham County Courthouse

Smoky Mountain Hikes

Each year **Don Hyatt** and **George McLellan** put together a series of hikes in the **Smoky Mountains** to view native azaleas and rhododendron. I have participated in portions of these hikes over the past several years. This year due to other commitments, my participation was limited to visiting **Wayah Bald** and **Wine Spring Bald**.



Calendulaceum and Mountain Laurel near Wine Spring Bald

Wayah is still recovering from a massive fire in the fall of 2016 which destroyed some major azalea, rhododendron and mountain laurel plants. The good news is that we were able to see evidence of plant recovery.

Wine Spring Bald didn't suffer any of the effects of the fire directly, though I was told that some large specimens had been cut down near the communication towers at the top to lessen the threat of fires near the towers. While there were impressive stands of calendulaceum, what impressed me most were the huge mountain laurel.

Cutting Exchange – 15 July 1-5 pm Kirkwood Presbyterian Church

One of the best things about being a member of the society is the ability to share plants and cuttings with other members. The annual cutting exchange is our prime opportunity for this sharing. If you haven't tried propagating in the past, I encourage you to give it a shot. I have added a large number of azalea varieties, especially those developed by chapter hybridizers, to my garden through propagating cuttings. More information on the meeting is in the latest copy of **The Azalea Clipper**, to be sent out shortly.

Calendar of Upcoming Events:

Below is the schedule for 2018. As always, events will be added (and rarely deleted) throughout the year (note the date changes below):

Date	Event	Organization	Location
July 15 1-5pm	Cutting Exchange	NV-ASA	Kirkwood Presbyterian Church Springfield, VA
Sep 29 (set up 28 Sep) Changed	Auction/Sale	NV-ASA	Kirkwood Presbyterian Church Springfield, VA
Oct 28 1-5 pm Changed	Fall Meeting w Speaker	NV-ASA	Kirkwood Presbyterian Church Springfield, VA
Oct 29 Changed	Executive Committee Meeting	NV-ASA	TBD
Dec 9	Holiday Social	NV-ASA	Beck's Home

Other Activities/Notes –

Miscellaneous –

Photos for *The Azalea Clipper*/Facebook – Barry is looking for pictures of your garden to share with other members on our chapter **Facebook** page and in the ***Clipper***. Now is the time to show off a little. Send your pictures to **Barry** at bsperling@cox.net.

We are also always looking for articles for ***The Azalea Clipper***. They don't have to be long and can be on any azalea related subject (e.g., gardens (public or private), hybridizers, companion plants etc.). Pictures are also always appreciated. Please consider writing an article. Contact **Barry** if you have any questions bsperling@cox.net or 703-765-7062. ***Clipper*** articles can also be the basis for later submissions to ***The Azalean*** (see below).

The Azalean – The editors of ***The Azalean*** depend on member submissions of articles of interest to the general **ASA** membership. If you have an article to share, send it to them at theazalean@gmail.com. Articles should be submitted as Microsoft Word documents. Illustrations are highly encouraged and should be at least 4 x 6 inches at 300 dpi.

Speakers – We continue to strive to provide speakers on topics of interest to our members. If you have heard, or are otherwise aware of, speakers who might be of interest to our chapter, please contact **Lars Larson** at lars.larson@cox.net or (703) 277-3441.

I'll be in Georgia giving a talk on the "Legacy Project" and will unfortunately miss the cutting exchange on 15 July. This is normally my favorite meeting of the year. I hope that many of you will have the opportunity to attend, to share cuttings with other members and guests and start a propagation effort of your own.

Rick