



Taking An Active Role

Rick Barnes, Vice President of Nature Scapes, has been named Chairman of the Georgia Green Industry Association. He proudly accepted the gavel at the Wintergreen Trade Show and Conference on January 17, 1997. Having been involved as a volunteer with the association for the past five years, Rick is excited to have the opportunity to serve the industry in a more focused position.

The Georgia Green Industry Association (GGIA) has approximately 650 members in the industry from retail nurseries, wholesale growers and landscape companies to allied sales companies and educational entities like the University of Georgia. The intent of this organization is to assist the horticultural industry in promoting quality products, service and professionalism through education, certification, monitoring legislative issues and interaction with other industry allies. The association has 2 full-time employees, but all other work is done through the generosity of time given by volunteer members.

One of Rick's main goals is to make the public more aware of the association and its intentions during his term. He is working closely with Sherry Loudermilk, Executive Director of GGIA on issues such as:

- *Developing clout for the GGIA certification program*, as well as creating a public demand for certification of retail and landscape professionals.
- *Maintaining relationships with State Legislators.* GGIA hosted a dinner reception at the Wintergreen Trade Show and Conference which was attended by 20 Legislators who later toured the show.
- *Acting as a "watch dog" group* to monitor legislation concerning unfair ad valorem practices on nursery stock in containers not ready for sale in some counties; water issues and regulations affecting agriculture and the green industry.
- *Continuing to provide educational opportunities* for professionals as well as a successful annual trade show.

Rick's chairmanship will take him all over the state and even to Washington, D.C. over the next year. But he feels the time he donates to GGIA is just compensation for how that organization benefits companies like Nature Scapes and the green industry in Georgia.

Summer Annuals: Dare To Be Different!

— Constance McCarthy and Rick Barnes

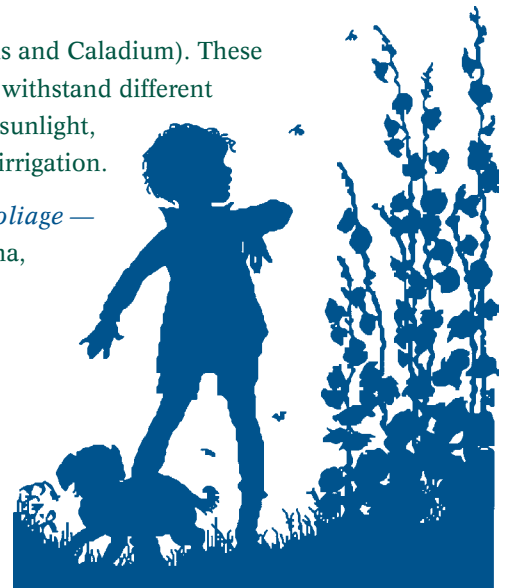
There is a new trend in summer annual color for both residential and commercial applications in Atlanta. The trend? Something different! For too many years we have seen the same thing — Begonias, Impatiens and Salvia.

The horticulturists at Nature Scapes have been searching growers for new plants to use with flower beds in different matches of color and texture. Here are several ideas to guide your selections for the coming year:

- *Variation in height* — Get away from the use of low-growing blooms by installing accent and focal plants which grow taller than the others.
- *Vivid color combinations* — Move from pastels to brighter hues, in mixtures that "push the envelope" on the color wheel.
- *Use of "shade plants" in higher light* — These days there are new varieties of many plants traditionally used in shade (like

Impatiens, Coleus and Caladium). These hybrids can now withstand different degrees of direct sunlight, especially under irrigation.

- *Use of tropical foliage* — Plants like Banana, Eucalyptus, Amaranth and Hibiscus give a tropical feel to summer beds.



- *Increased use of containers* — Annuals and shrubs in planters make a powerful statement in limited spaces. We'll help you find new ways to use containers and design them for a long season of continuous bloom. One caution for best results: use larger planters and fewer of them.
- *Extending the bloom season* — Some plants, like Cleome, tend to play out before the end of summer. Replacing them with late-season bloomers like Mexican Sage or Chrysanthemum will extend your pleasure well into the Fall. This costs a little more — but the results can be dazzling.

Following are some plants that can be used for new and exciting flower combinations:

Full Sun:

Low growing (good for border or ground cover)

Scaevola: Blue flower — looks good with Begonias and New Gold Lantana.

Verbena 'Roseum': Hot pink flower — good mixed with New Gold Lantana, Scaevola, white Zinnia Linearis, Blue Plumbago and Alabama Sunset Coleus.

Sweet Potato Vine: Purple & Chartreuse — purple works well with pinks, reds and yellow Begonias, New Gold Lantana and Melampodium. Or try chartreuse with Purple Fountain Grass, pink Begonias and Verbena Roseum.

'Wave' Petunias: Pink and purple — good as a mix together. Or try purple with Cosmos Lady Bird mix (orange, yellow and reds).

New Gold Lantana: Golden yellow — good with Salvias (red, purple and blue), Purple Fountain Grass, and Begonias. Many other colors of Lantana exist: white, orange, pink yellow orange mix, lavender and various shades of mixed-color flowers.

Full sun: Upright growth habits

'Alabama Sunset' Coleus: Sun tolerant variety — leaves are yellow with rose colored middles. Reaching a height of 24

+ inches, this plant is good with Begonias, Verbena Roseum, New Gold Lantana, pink Lantanas and other Coleus (such as Golden Wizard).

Plumbago: Light blue and white flowers — 36 inches and up. Both varieties work well with New Gold Lantana, Roseum Verbena, Salvias, Begonias, Purple Fountain Grass and Sunflowers.

Breynia (or Hawaiian Snow Bush): Foliage plant with white, green and hot pink leaves — 24 to 36 inches. Breynia goes well with Purple Fountain Grass, New Gold Lantana, sun tolerant Coleus and Begonias.

Purple Fountain Grass: Annual ornamental grass with dark purple leaves — 36 inches and up. This plant's dramatic coloring goes well with just about everything. There is also a green variety which blends especially well with pinks.

Salvia Salsa Series: Purple, salmons and reds — same flower shape and colors as sizzlers series. This plant looks like the Salvia most are familiar with except the flowers have white or lighter-colored "tongues".

Gomphrena: Reds, purple, lavender, pink and white — 10 to 24 inches tall. The 'Buddy' Gomphrena is a shorter variety, growing only 4 to 6 inches. These small blooms on long stems mix well with Lantana, Blue Salvia, Begonias and Scaevola and make attractive dried flowers.

Salvia Elegans (or Pineapple Sage): Grows to 36 inches, with spikes of small reddish-pink flowers. More graceful than the Salvia sizzler, this plant has small leaves, and may live over winter in mild weather. Hummingbirds love it.

Salvia Guaranitica: Shaped like the Pineapple Sage but its flowers are blue. Hummingbirds also like this one.

Zinnia Linearis: White and orange varieties — grows 12 to 16 inches. This plant's foliage is fine, with narrow leaves and flowers little bigger than a quarter that resemble Daisies.

Tropical Hibiscus: Pinks, red, salmon and white — tree form and bush form. This plant works well in pots and back borders, giving height to a perennial garden.

Tropical Indoor Plants: One last suggestion — If there is a shady porch or place in your garden that just "needs something," try a tropical! Often an indoor plant like Spathiphyllum, Chinese Evergreen, Cast Iron plant, Sansevieria or Dracaena can provide the perfect touch for a shady entry way or a spot in the woodland garden. Put one from the house outside for the summer. Your plant will appreciate those months of indirect light.

Let us know how Nature Scapes can help you dare to be different with flower selections this year!



Southern Azaleas – So Many Choices!

It is guaranteed that spring in Atlanta will be a grand show, accentuated with the abundance of color produced by Azaleas. Blooming profusely in a variety of vivid colors, they are a favorite in southern gardens.

Some considerations for selecting Azaleas are:

- Evergreen or Deciduous
- Mature height and habit of growth
- Bloom and foliage color and how it will coordinate with other plantings or structures
- Bloom time
- Location and cultural adaptability

General Culture

Azaleas and Rhododendron are in the same genus of plants, so Rhododendron will be noted here as well. Azaleas may seem easy to grow, but they have cultural preferences and certainly have a more welcome appearance if planted in the right setting. Rhododendron are a little more site-sensitive since this part of the country is on the southern fringe of their growing range. Both plants prefer cool, moist areas and do not do well in full sun.

Azaleas love pine shade, while Rhododendron do not do so well, preferring hardwoods. They both grow best in an acid soil with a pH of between 4.5 and 6.5. Covering the base of plants with pine needles, oak leaves or an organic mulch helps retain moisture and the correct pH level. Water well during droughts, and remember that *Rhododendron will not tolerate poor drainage*. The Extension Service recommends setting these plants on top of the ground and mounding soil around their root balls to be sure they will not get “wet feet”.

It is best not to use Azaleas or Rhododendron as a foundation plant where there is a large amount of mortar or stucco. Rain splashing on these surfaces may dissolve a certain amount of lime into the soil. This increases soil alkalinity which causes plants to weaken or die. A good setting for Azaleas or Rhododendron is a natural area, with older trees for shade.

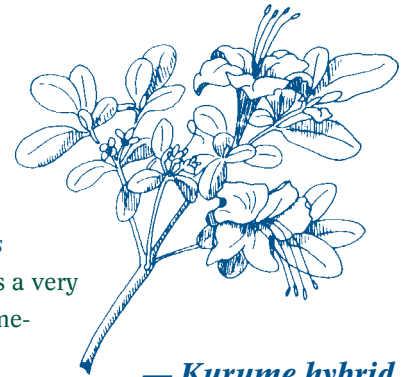
Here are some choice varieties that have proven to be good plants for our area:

Evergreens

Southern Indica hybrid azaleas (Azalea x indicum) — Originating in Japan, these were the first evergreen azaleas introduced into the United States. They have an informal appearance with a loose, slightly mounding growth habit. They



— *Flame azalea*



— *Kurume hybrid*

will eventually grow to 10 feet or more. Varieties include *Formosa* with large, magenta flowers and *GL Tabor*, having large pink flowers with a dark blotch.

Kurume hybrid azaleas (Azalea obtusum) — This is a very popular hybrid, growing somewhat smaller, only reaching to 4 to 6 feet in height. Varieties include *Coral Bells* with small, clear pink flowers; *Honode-giri* with red/dark pink flowers and *Snow* with white flowers.

Satsuki hybrid (Azalea x indicum) — The best azaleas in this group are the Gumpos. They are low growing, reaching only 3 to 4 feet high and have a prostrate growth habit. These azaleas bloom late May or June. Varieties include *Waka-bisu* with Salmon pink flowers; *Pink Gumpo* with medium pink flowers and *White Gumpo* with white flowers.

Deciduous Azaleas

Native Azaleas have honeysuckle-like flowers and can be found blooming in wooded areas around the south. They have a more open and upright growth habit, reaching as high as 10 feet at maturity.

Flame azalea (Azalea calendulaceum) — This bush grows to 10 feet, producing yellow flowers which bloom mid-May to late June.

Oconee azalea (Azalea flammeum) — Growing to 6 feet this bush produces pink flowers.

Piedmont azalea (Azalea canescens) — The fragrant flowers this bush produces bloom in light to dark pink hues before or with new leaves. The plant can reach 10 feet in height.

Plumleaf azalea (Azalea prunifolium) — Blooming in July or August, this bush produces orange red to deep red flowers, and reaches 10 feet at maturity.



— *Hybrid Rhododendron*

Rhododendron (Rhododendron x. sp.)

Rhododendron have a lush, dark foliage and large bouquet-like flowers which grow in clusters. Size varies by selection. A few of the hardier plants include *Vulcan* which produces red flowers; *Chinoïdes* with white flowers and *Anna Rose Whitney* the flowers of which are pink.

Congratulations Are In Order

— Cynthia Upchurch

Nature Scapes would like to take time to congratulate two employees who recently became fathers. This past August 16th, Allen Clemons and his wife Nicole welcomed their son with love. Austin Allen Clemons was a tiny tot at birth, weighing just 4 pounds 15 ounces, but he has not wasted any time becoming a robust 18 pounds!

Adan Benitez has also been blessed with a son. He and his wife, Gladys, are proud to announce the arrival of Yerlys Adan Benitez. Yerlys was born August 27, weighing 7 pounds 8 ounces. When asked to comment about the birth, both parents replied simply, "We love him a lot and he is cute!" Congratulations to both families.

Another family matter worth mentioning involves the Tejada brothers. Juan and Miguel have been with Nature Scapes for approximately 10 years. While they worked here, their families remained in El Salvador. It has been hard for them to see their families only every 15 months or so. This past December, both brothers moved their wives and children here to join them. We'd like to say, "Welcome to all" and hope that everyone is adjusting to their new life in the United States.

Big Bucks Bingo Brings Back Basics

— Rodney Anderson

Nature Scapes has started a new bingo game which allows players to win some big money.

Directed at foremen, the game provides a pleasant incentive for cleaning and maintaining equipment. On a daily basis, each player must satisfy the items on a checklist which includes responsibilities like changing the blades on their mowers, cleaning air filters and servicing the other equipment they use. Truck cabs too must be cleared and hand tools accounted for. Once a week our foremen come in early to wash their mowers and trucks. And if for any reason this list is ignored, the player's bingo card is pulled. Then he is out of the game until the next one starts. Our first winner, Gonzalo Hernandez, is the proud recipient of \$250.00!

Who We Are

Cultivated News is published four times a year by Nature Scapes, Inc., for over ten years a provider of landscaping, maintenance, irrigation and floriculture services to the metropolitan Atlanta area.

Nature Scapes, Inc. is a charter member of GGIA – Georgia Green Industry Association, MALTA – Metro Atlanta Landscape & Turf Association and GTAI – Georgia Turfgrass Association, Inc. We also belong to the Southern Nurseryman's Association.

Natures Scapes, Inc. operates a drug-free workplace, as certified by the State Board of Workers' Compensation.

If you have any topics or questions you would like to see discussed or elaborated on in a future issue of this newsletter, please call and let us know.

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