



The Mid-South Hydrangea Society In Bloom!

Volume 3, Issue 1

February 2007

From the President:

It's been another wonderful year for the Hydrangea Society! We enjoyed Chris Spindel's talk last February on Ferns for the Hydrangea Garden (essential, as far as I'm concerned). Our membership was boosted by Dr. Michael Durr in April, a special speaker we hope to lure back to Memphis in the future. We had a very successful garden tour in June (thank you hosts!), and if you missed our October meeting, you really missed a treat. Hayes Jackson, a new face for most of our Mid-South gardeners was our speaker (see article later in this newsletter). Hayes travels with Tony Avent and others, and we'll definitely put him back on our speakers list.

We'll be hosting Eddie Aldridge at our February 12th, 2007 meeting and I am eager to hear him. I know you won't want to miss it. Following Eddie's presentation, we will be sharing a MSHS Year in Review slide show. It will include the American Hydrangea Society Tour in Atlanta last June, which several of us were able to attend, including Ann & Jim Zaner and Toot Fineburg-Buchner.

I had a wonderful time traveling to gardens this year. I especially enjoyed Winterthur (for the annual Horticulture Magazine Garden Fair, Longwood Gardens, and a new garden near Philadelphia open only about 5 years, Chanticleer, (www.chanticleergarden.org)). What a gem! There were helpful plant lists available in all areas of the garden with maps, which even included many plants in containers. I was also able to get to Nantucket Hydrangea Farm where I visited Mal Condon and Frank Dutra. (Frank raises miniature hydrangeas, which is a story for another newsletter.) Mal will be speaking at the International Hydrangea Conference in Belgium this summer and we hope to bring him to Memphis later to speak to our group. I was also able to attend the CANR (Center for Applied Nursery Research at canr.org, Dearing, GA) Open House in June for a look at upcoming selections, which included the new Majestic Series hydrangeas (see article later in this newsletter). Some of us also visited (Don) Shadow Nursery in Winchester, TN. He has some beautiful hydrangeas, including a favorite of mine, *H. paniculata* 'Silver Dollar', and I have several on order for next fall. This wholesale nursery should be on a group road trip! Garden travel is most rewarding and I encourage you all to plan a trip with friends sometime this year. And let us know if you find a special garden, nursery, or garden shop. We're all eager to find new places and we'll share your finds in the newsletter.



We've made some changes to the Board, with Linda Orton taking over as President, Caroline Brown as Vice-President and Newsletter, Kennon Hampton will be our new Treasurer (we now have \$9755.34 in our Treasury), and I'll be taking over Membership. Linda Orton has done such a terrific job with Programs, she'll continue to work on our programs and has us lined up for the whole year. I know you all eagerly anticipate our terrific newsletter and Spring Hydrangea Finder, which Caroline will continue to publish. Anne Riordan will continue to organize our delightful June Garden Tour. She's already thinking about 2008 (that is, when she is not anticipating her upcoming trip to the UK for the Chelsea Garden Show!) We all enjoy sharing these responsibilities and have enjoyed forming this group and coming up with new activities. However, if you're interested in volunteering to help, please let one of the Board members know.

Don't forget to renew your membership – it's going to be another great year for Hydrangeas!

Linda Lanier, 2006 President



Eddie Aldridge to Speak at Mid-South Hydrangea Society's February 2007 Meeting

On Monday, February 12th, 2007, retired nurseryman, Eddie Aldridge from Hoover, Alabama will be the guest speaker for the Mid-South Hydrangea Society. This meeting will be held at the Memphis Botanic Garden and begins at 7 p.m.

Eddie Aldridge and his father, Loren, saw their first ever double-flowering form of oakleaf hydrangea in the Alabama woods in 1969 and Eddie knew they were seeing an extraordinary plant. The father and son, noted internationally for their work with Hydrangea, patented and named this sterile discovery 'Snowflake' in 1971 for the blossoms that have multiple bracts that create a double-flowered hose-in-hose effect. They propagated it to bring it to prominence and never took a royalty for cuttings.

Eddie and his wife, Kay conveyed their home and property to the city of Hoover, Alabama in 1994, and set up an endowment to preserve the land as a horticultural park. It's now known as Aldridge Gardens and the Hydrangea quercifolia 'Snowflake' is the signature flower of the gardens. This beautiful woodland botanical garden is the realization of the family's dream of developing a showcase for all hydrangeas. Aldridge Gardens consists of 30 acres with a 6.5-acre lake, many miles of trails and hydrangeas of all kinds. An outstanding feature of the garden is a long swath of Hydrangea quercifolia 'Snowflake' that was planted by Eddie and his father and has now matured to over 6 feet in height. When in bloom, with its large panicles of white flowers that can reach a length of 15 inches, it's a sight to behold. Go to www.aldridgegardens.com and acquaint yourself with this wonderful garden.

Eddie is a past president of the Alabama Nurserymen's Association (ANA) and in 1999 was presented the W. Kelley Mosley Environmental Award in recognition of his wise and creative use of natural resources and his contributions to Alabama's natural environment. Most recently, the ANA presented Aldridge with its prestigious Lifetime Achievement Award.

Eddie will speak on the history of Aldridge Gardens and the story behind the Hydrangea quercifolia 'Snowflake'. Eddie is a charming southern gentleman with a casual style to his presentations. Please make plans to join us.



2006 Year In Review

Also at our February 12th meeting, Linda Orton will give a brief presentation highlighting the society's activities in 2006 — the Dirr event, American Hydrangea Society garden tour, road trips, etc. Grab an extra cookie and beverage at the break, then sit back for a photographic stroll down memory lane.

Plant Introductions by Eddie Aldridge...



Hydrangea quercifolia 'Snowflake'

Oakleaf hydrangeas are native to Alabama, especially the area around Birmingham. 'Snowflake', with its very showy, double flowers, was introduced in the early 1980's by nurseryman Eddie Aldridge and his father. The plant was found in the wild in Jefferson County, Alabama. The hydrangea has 15-inch-long panicles of white flowers arranged in multiple bracts that produce a double-flowered effect. As the season progresses, the bracts eventually fade to dusty pink and then to brown. The large, coarse leaves look very much like oak leaves. The shrub is deciduous, but the autumn foliage, which is a deep burgundy, lasts well into December.

'Snowflake' will reach a height of more than six feet at maturity. Hardy in USDA Zones 5 to 8.

How to use it: Plant in a mixed-shrub border or create a long border beside a driveway or parking area. Excellent massed in a natural garden.

Cultivation: Grow in filtered shade in moist, fertile, well-drained soil. Any pruning can be done after flowering.

Hydrangea quercifolia 'Harmony'

Discovered in a church cemetery near Rainbow City, Alabama, by the father of plantsman Joe McDaniel, 'Harmony' was also introduced to the trade by Eddie Aldridge and his father.

'Harmony' has large, tight blooms that are extremely double. The white panicles can weigh as much as one pound apiece and look a lot like those of the sun-loving peegee hydrangea (*Hydrangea paniculata*). Hardy in USDA Zones 5 or 6 to 8. The foliage starts off as a grayish green as it unfolds in spring. During summer, leaves are deep green and sometimes glossy. Fall foliage ranges from red to orange to purple.

How to use it: The blooms of 'Harmony' are so heavy that they tend to weigh down the branches. It's worth growing, however, just for the fascinating blooms.

Cultivation: Site in high, filtered shade with some protection from the hot summer sun. As with all oakleaf hydrangeas, it needs well-drained, moist soil with good organic matter.



The 2007 International Hydrangea Conference is August 16-19, 2007 in Ghent, Belgium. The conference is co-hosted by the Ghent University Botanical Garden and the Belgian Hydrangea Society. For more information on the conference including registration details, go to www.hydrangeum.be.



ROYAL MAJESTICS™ HYDRANGEAS



More introductions from Dr. Michael Dirr's Woody Plant Introduction Program at the University of Georgia. These exciting new hydrangeas are being marketed through McCorkle Nurseries' *Gardener's Confidence Collection* and will begin arriving at select garden centers and nurseries this spring.

Those who attended Dr. Dirr's April 2006 presentation to our society got an overview of the extensive research being conducted and a sneak peek of these new releases.



Midnight Duchess™

Lacecap with green sepals that bloom mauve-pink before maturing lime-green. Glossy, dark green foliage and distinctive purple-black stems. Blooms spring to summer. Average height and width: 3' to 5'.



Princess Lace™



Star-shaped white lacecap sepals that mature light pink or blue, depending on soil pH. Presentation is enhanced by strong, upright stems and dark green foliage with large leaves. Blooms spring to summer. Average height and width: 4' to 6'.

Mini Penny™

Named in honor of Penny McHenry, founder of the American Hydrangea Society, this is a compact remontant (re-blooming) mophead with blooms of pink or blue, depending on soil pH. Small, lustrous, mildew resistant dark green leaves. Blooms spring to summer. Removing spent flowers will encourage rebloom into fall. Average height and width: 3' to 4'.

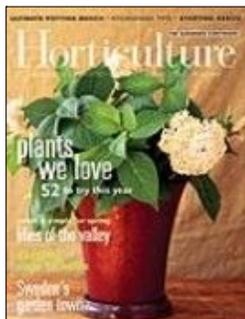


Queen of Pearls™

Mophead hydrangea with blooms that start green, open pure white then mature to green. Blooms are offset by lustrous, deep green disease-resistant foliage. Blooms spring to summer. Average height and width: 3' to 5'.



Center for Applied Nursery Research (CANR) Open House



Horticulture magazine
2007 Spring Planting
Issue with 'Blushing
Bride' on the cover &
hydrangea pruning tips.

I was able to attend the CANR Open House in Dearing, GA on October 12. It's held outside and it was a beautiful day with several noted people from the horticulture and university arena. There were updates in several areas of plants and commercial growing, but of course my primary interest was in the new hydrangea introductions. Many of these have been in trials with commercial growers, and we should start to see these new introductions very soon. The primary *H. macrophyllas* were 'Blushing Bride' (already on the market—be sure you get one this year!) and the Royal Majestic hydrangeas being introduced in 2007. I'll be eagerly

awaiting these hydrangeas in our area (take notice, independent garden centers!) Mal Condon, Nantucket Hydrangea Farm, has trialed some of these and says 'Queen of Pearls' is even better than 'Blushing Bride' and the best white he's ever seen. Some of you travel to Atlanta regularly, and we're finding earlier availability of new plants in that market. Let us know if you are able to purchase any of these this year. We want to see your pictures and get your comments. And we'll keep you updated on our findings at the CANR.

Linda Lanier



Resolution or Rehab?

It's the beginning of a new year and, as usual, I'm making resolutions. This year, one is related to my gardening habits. It was brought to my attention last year that I have a problem. In fact, you may share this problem with me without even knowing it. I didn't really have a name for it prior to October 2006 when Hayes Jackson from Anniston, Alabama, came to Memphis to do a program for our society. Several of us were standing around visiting about our most exciting plant acquisitions and out of nowhere Hayes confessed to this new group of plant friends and acquaintances. He has a **"Pot Problem"**! We all paused and looked at each other, our heads all nodding in unison. We all understood. We had it too!

If you have sections of your garden; driveway or carport crammed with plants in nursery pots waiting for a permanent home, then you have a pot problem. Do many or all of these plants remain there in excess of 6 months or even through several seasons? If so, you have it real bad. My gardening definition for this condition is as follows: "A pot problem occurs when a gardener acquires plants at a rate more rapid than they have the time or space to plant them within a reasonable amount of time". (Though "reasonable amount of time" is open for interpretation. . .)

So my New Year's resolution for 2007 is not to buy plants faster than I can plant them. So far I am doing great. And I take great solace knowing that others have a bigger problem than mine (Caroline??). However, I must confess, I am starting to feel the pressure of those spring plant sales which are quickly approaching. What if I should fail? What next? **Rehab?!?**

Linda Orton

Refreshments & Help with Set-Up

It's always nice to have some food and refreshments for us and our guests during our meetings. Please remember to bring "finger food" for this group of 'Hydrangea Heads'. It would also be appreciated if a few kind souls would arrive a little early to help set up the refreshment table. The cold drinks will be provided by the Society.

THANKS to VOLUNTEERS

Volunteer hours at the Memphis Botanic Garden can be donated to the Mid-South Hydrangea Society to help offset meeting room costs. Thanks to two of our members for their donated hours – Caroline Forster (95 hrs) & Kathy Balsman (35 hrs)!!!





Hydrangea Walk Update

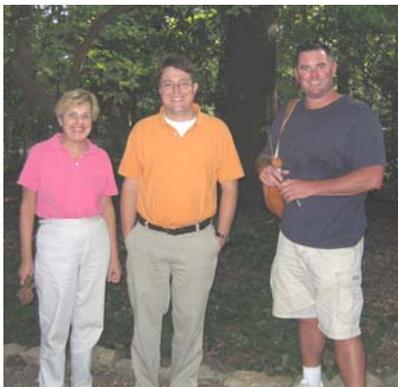
Our enthusiasm for the newly formed Hydrangea beds at the Memphis Botanic Garden has outpaced the workload of Rick Pudwell and Kyle McLane. We had planned on having an October 2006 workday, however, the many demands of the gardens on Rick and Kyle along with our winter rains have delayed it into 2007. Rick tells us they have the new hydrangea plants heeled in and are working on finishing the bed preparation and reviewing design ideas for some hardscape. Rick will keep us informed as to when and if we will be needed.

Once the initial planting and long term planning is done, we are on the way to having a wonderful collection of hydrangeas growing right here in the Mid-South. I hope you share our excitement over how, with the hard work and support of the Memphis Botanic Garden, this is going to be made possible. Diane Meucci of Gardens Oyvey has been working with Rick to generate an appropriate planting scheme as well as donating a number of *H. serratas*. Joel Stout of Cricket Hill Farm, Conway, AR has also been a generous contributor of Hydrangeas to this new collection. See www.gardensoyvey.com/hydrangea_garden/plan.html for a peek at what's in the works along with a listing of the varieties to be planted.

Linda Orton

On the Trail of Native Hydrangea Discoveries

Hayes Jackson's October program reminded us of the many wonderful native Hydrangeas we have the ability to grow successfully in our Mid-South gardens. He addressed different *Hydrangea quercifolia* cultivars and selections such as 'Snowflake', 'Harmony', 'Sike's Dwarf', 'PeeWee', 'Alice' and 'Snow Queen'. He also shared with us some new Oakleaf introductions to look for such as *H. quercifolia* 'Turkey Heaven' with its huge



Diane Reed giving Dale Skaggs & Hayes Jackson a pre-meeting tour of Dixon Gardens

full heads held on erect stems which was found on Turkey Heaven Mountain in Cleburne County, Alabama by the Fordham family over 40 years ago and recently introduced. There is also a cut-leaf form with dissected foliage and smaller blooms but with excellent fall foliage color and others such as 'Fuzzy Wuzzy' with sterile flowers that give the appearance of a bottle-brush buckeye bloom. Hayes reminded us not to overlook our other native Hydrangeas such as *arborescens*, *H. radiata* and *H. cinerea*. Some selections he depicted of *H. arborescens* were: 'Bounty' which is a nice mophead type, a Don Jacobs introduction with pinkish flowers named 'Eco Pink Puff, and Hayes' own discovery, 'Hayes' Starburst'.



Hayes' is an avid plantsman and he also gave us an overview of his recent plant collecting trip to Vietnam and Thailand. He tempted us with exotic and unusual Curcumas, Alocasias, Colocasias, and even Liriopes!

It was a real treat to travel along with Hayes on his explorations since not many of us will be able to travel to such far flung destinations in search of that new and unusual plant variety. However, we can explore our local backyard habitat and if we have a sharp eye we might find something special or different in our own back yards.

Speaking of Hydrangeas . . .

Hydrangeas are hot! Since the inception of our society the founding board has reached out to many garden clubs and other groups interested in learning more about hydrangeas. We have talked with over 1,000 people in about 19 clubs and have had more requests than we could manage! Some of the groups we've spoken to are: FedEx Garden Seminars, Poplar Estates Garden Club, Retired Navy Officers Wives Club, Hein Park Garden Club, Collierville Library Gardening Seminars, Madison County Master Gardeners (Jackson, TN), Montgomery County Master Gardeners (Clarksville, TN), Germantown Garden Club, Hedgemoor Garden Club, Olive Branch Garden Club, Dixie Regional Hosta Society Convention, Memphis Area Master Gardener Spring Fever event, DeSoto Civic Garden Club, 21st Century Home & Garden Club, Memphis Area Master Gardeners, Delta Home & Garden Club (Cleveland, MS), Covington Garden Club, Evergreen Garden Club, and the Cordova Garden Club.

In 2007 some of the groups we are already scheduled with are: LeBonheur Garden Club, Millington Reading Club, Arkansas Flower & Garden Show, Garden Club of Rosemark, Memphis Garden Club, Quachita Hosta & Shade Plant Society (Hot Springs, AR), and the International Master Gardener Conference (Little Rock, AR).

If your garden club or group is interested in a presentation about our favorite shrub, please contact **Linda Lanier** or **Linda Orton** and we'll try to schedule one for you! We plan to have even more exciting hydrangea information and photos following the International Hydrangea Conference in Belgium in August.

Inspector Hortensias needed for Memphis Botanic Garden Hydrangea Research Project



I have spoken to Dr. Stan Myers with the Memphis Botanic Garden about initiating a research program around the new and expanded Hydrangea gardens. This would mean evaluating the performance of each Hydrangea variety planted at the Memphis Botanic Garden on a regularly scheduled basis. For those members who are not able to consistently go to the MBG, I would encourage you to consider volunteering to do regular evaluations on the Hydrangeas you grow. This information would be submitted as a "back yard" report. The goal would be to create a database of information that would give our membership and all Mid-Southerners insight into the best hydrangeas for reliable bloom, disease resistance and other possible attributes. This would require a long term commitment by our members but wouldn't it be great to participate in the creation of a one of kind research report for our specific region?

A number of people will be needed to do these evaluations. Dr. Stan Myers wants to meet with those of you who are interested and willing to commit to this program. Stan will teach us and guide us in this endeavor. I will have indication of interest sheets at our next meeting on February 12, 2007. If you will not be attending the meeting, you may contact me at ortonLM@bellsouth.net or 901-383-4433. A date will then be set up to meet with Stan to get our '*Inspector Hortensias*' ready to go for spring 2007. If you are a Memphis Area Master Gardener, participation in this project would qualify as Education Given hours.

Linda Orton

Membership Update

Welcome to our new Mid-South Hydrangea Society members who have joined since the October newsletter:

Apperson-Crowley, Minetry
Chambers, Mike
Frogge, Ann
Harcrow, Sandra
Harrison, Joan
Hudson, Laurie
Johansen, Warren
Laney, Linda
Mullins, James
Nancy, LaCook
Only, Betty
Parrott, Celia
Reid, Bowman
Richardson, Sarah
Shepherd, Donna
Sligh, Kelli
Stoodley, Martha
Taylor, Marilyn
Woehst, Stella

**THE MID-SOUTH
HYDRANGEA SOCIETY**

635 West Dr.

Memphis, TN 38112

E-Mail: hydrangea@midsouth.rr.com

2007 Officers

President/ Programs	Linda Orton ortonlm@bellsouth.net 383-4433
Vice-President/ Newsletter	Caroline Brown ckbrown@fedex.com 683-9766
Membership	Linda Lanier llanier1@midsouth.rr.com 452-4667
Treasurer	Kennon Hampton kennonhampton@aol.com 829-2598
Annual Tour Chair	Anne Riordan mailmanann@bellsouth.net 683-7458

MARK YOUR CALENDAR...

✓ Monday, February 12
Mid-South Hydrangea Society meeting
Memphis Botanic Garden, 7:00 p.m.
Eddie Aldridge, Birmingham, AL
Aldridge Gardens &
History of Hydrangea quercifolia 'Snowflake'

✓ Monday, April 9
Mid-South Hydrangea Society meeting
Memphis Botanic Garden, 7:00 pm
Sara Henderson, Atlanta, GA
Hydrangeas & their Companions

Sara is past president of the American Hydrangea Society and the Georgia Perennial Plant Association