

Azalea Cultivar Walk Receives Facelift

Six interpretive signs along the Azalea Collections' Henry Mitchell Azalea Cultivar Walk have a new look. In place of the 9" x 12" black and white metal photo signs on wooden posts are 14" x 20" full color signs in metal frames. Fiberglass embedment technology developed since the 1999 installation of the original signs offered the option of making relatively inexpensive color replacements for the damaged and weather-worn old metal signs. The new signs include images of representative flowers, giving visitors an idea of the beauty of the azaleas even when they are not in bloom.

The signs identify six different azalea cultivar groups—Glenn Dale, Kiusianum, Kurume, North Tisbury, Robin Hill, and Satsuki. The text explains why each cultivar group is unique and provides helpful information about hardiness zones, flower size, bloom time, and plant habit and height.

The walk was dedicated in 1999 to Henry Mitchell, a beloved Washington area garden writer and regular arboretum visitor, who died in 1993. Funds were donated in his memory to the Friends of the National Arboretum. It was agreed that plant labels and signage would best honor his advocacy for better plant identification and plant information. Azalea curator Barbara Bullock had been building the collection of azalea cultivar groups along the lower path on the east side of the collection, thus it was chosen as the site for the interpretive walk. The path connects the Lee Garden on the north end and the Morrison Garden on the south.



U.S. National Arboretum

Displaying Good Breeding



Rhododendron 'Melanie'

This walk is dedicated to the memory of Henry Mitchell (1923-1993), beloved garden writer, by his family and friends.

It isn't polite to brag about your background unless you're a plant cultivar. Being a *cultivated variety* means someone bred or selected you for a special feature like size or flower color. Your name in single quotes signifies your uniqueness.

The U.S. National Arboretum proudly displays and preserves some of the finest winter-hardy azalea cultivars for the mid-Atlantic region.



Look for this symbol along the Henry Mitchell Azalea Cultivar Walk to discover which azalea cultivar groups we've chosen to collect and why.

Late Bloomers



Rhododendron 'Shinkyo'

Even the best families include members that wait to shine. Among evergreen azalea cultivars, **Satsuki** azaleas are some of the last to flower, exploding in a rainbow of colors in late May and early June. Dedicated Japanese horticulturists labored for centuries, mixing and matching azaleas, to create new late-blooming plants with an extraordinary range of flower color and form.

Satsuki Azaleas

USDA Hardiness Zone 7a

Small to large flower size

1½ to 4 inches

Low to medium shrub

1 to 6 feet tall

Late blooming

Late May to mid-June



Henry Mitchell
Azalea Cultivar Walk

Obsession



Rhododendron 'Allure'

Isn't that what you'd call it when a scientist spends 30 years breeding more than 45,000 evergreen azaleas? In the 1920s, B.Y. Morrison, later appointed first director of the U.S. National Arboretum, pursued his dream to create the hardiest, largest flowered azaleas for the Washington, D.C., area. His 454 hybrids, named **Glenn Dale** azaleas, are a living memorial to his passion and success.

Glenn Dale Azaleas

USDA Hardiness Zone 6b

Large flower size

Up to 4 inches

Medium to tall shrub

3 to 8 feet tall

Early to late blooming

Mid-April to mid-June



Henry Mitchell
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“I want them!”



Rhododendron 'Iwato Kagami'

Excitement over the 1915 San Francisco exhibition of 12 azalea cultivars from Kurume, Japan, quickly spread across the United States. By 1919, Americans had imported more than 100 different **Kurume** hybrids. The first widely available, cold-hardy, evergreen azaleas for northern gardens, Kurumes are still popular choices today.

Kurume Azaleas

USDA Hardiness Zone 6b

Small flower size

1 to 1½ inches

Medium shrub

Slow growing, up to 6 feet tall

Early blooming

Mid- to late April



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Mountain to Garden



Rhododendron 'Hinode'

Imagine what it would take for a plant to survive on a cold, windy mountaintop. In the harsh, high-altitude conditions of their native habitat, **Kiusianum** azaleas from Japan grow as tight mounds with tiny, semi-evergreen leaves. Gardeners welcome this compact form for shade and rock gardens.

Kiusianum Azaleas

USDA Hardiness Zone 7a

Small flower size

1 inch or less

Low shrub

2 to 3 feet tall

Early to mid-blooming

Mid-April to mid-May



*Henry Mitchell
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What's Your Hobby?



Rhododendron 'Eunice Updike'

Some people collect stamps. Robert Gartrell of Wyckoff, New Jersey, spent his free time tending 25,000 azalea seedlings. Over 1,000 times he crossed different azalea parents to produce seed that would grow into the most beautiful and hardiest late-blooming hybrid azaleas. His choicest selections became the **Robin Hill** azalea collection.

Robin Hill Azaleas

USDA Hardiness Zone 6b

Medium to large flower size

2 to 3½ inches

Low to medium shrub

2 to 5 feet tall

Mid- to late blooming

Mid-May to mid-June



*Henry Mitchell
Azalea Cultivar Walk*

Designer Azaleas



Rhododendron 'Joseph Hill'

Fashions come in all sizes and colors and, happily for gardeners, so do azaleas. Polly Hill's evergreen **North Tisbury** azaleas fit perfectly where the garden design calls for a low, spreading shrub. As late bloomers, these hardy azaleas also provide colorful accents in the early summer landscape.

North Tisbury Evergreen Azaleas

USDA Hardiness Zone 6b

Medium flower size

1¾ to 3 inches

Low, mounding shrub

1 to 2 feet tall, up to 6 feet wide

Late blooming

Late May to mid-June



*Henry Mitchell
Azalea Cultivar Walk*