

Charleston's Azalea Gardens Will Open Early

Middleton, Magnolia, Cypress Gardens Filled With Beauty

The word from the South that inter vacationers and experienced travelers have been waiting is that the azaleas in Charleston's world-famous gardens will be unusually early this year—the earliest in the recollection of C. Erwood Hastie, Jr., of Magnolia Gardens.

"Because of our unseasonably warm weather, we expect our spectacular azalea season will be all under way early in March," according to Mr. Hastie. "This year will be of particular interest to the thousands of gardeners who plan their late winter and spring travels so as to be in Charleston when the great masses of azaleas stage their annual carnival of color in Magnolia, Cypress, and Middleton Gardens.

The azalea season usually begins late in March, and lasts through April. Last year, also a mild winter, the peak came in the March. But, judging by the masses of plants already showing color, the gardens should be in full bloom before the middle of March, with late varieties carrying the season to late April."

Azaleas Blossoming
B. R. Kittredge, Jr., of Cypress Gardens, reports that early azaleas are already beginning to bloom in his fabulous water garden, and that the daily number of visitors is increasing.

J. Pringle Smith, owner of Middleton Gardens, adds his assurance that "America's outstanding landscaped garden" will be exceptionally early this year.

All three of America's great gardens are now at the peak of their camellia season; and the azalea season started around the first week in March.

Each of the gardens is preparing for a record attendance this year, especially since, as Mr. Smith points out, more than 20,000 visitors saw the flaming azaleas on one day last season—setting an all-time record for the gardens for a single day.

Mr. Smith announces that an entire section of Middleton has been covered—it had lain dormant since the War Between the States. This year it has been cleared and replanted, adding a section that will astonish travelers who regularly visit the garden.

Years Ago
Middleton, according to the records of the South Carolina Lowcountry, was already a noted garden in 1741, when Henry Middleton, later President of the Continental Congress, sent abroad for a disciple of the famous Petin, to lay out the Versailles Garden, to extend the landscaping of Middleton. Under this guidance, slaves toiled 10 years to mold magnificent terraces, which were acclaimed as the finest in the field.

Arthur Middleton, a signer of the Declaration of Independence, led vast reaches of beauty to the garden; and his son, Henry Middleton, Governor of South Carolina and later Minister to Russia, extended the plantings with the help of Andre Michaux, a French botanist. Today, under the supervision of a direct Middleton descendant, Mr. Smith, the garden is at the peak of its beauty.

In 1941, the Garden Club of America awarded its coveted Key Medal to Middleton "in commemoration of 200 years of enduring beauty." The Medal had been awarded only once before, to the B. Lockwood, then President of the club, wrote: "The most important and interesting garden

in America is that at Middleton Place." **Three New Sections**
Mr. Hastie reports that massive groupings of early and late azaleas now provide matchless brilliance in three new sections of Magnolia, adding that visitors will see the garden this year as never before, since the myriads of blossoms are to be sprayed every other day with a formula developed with the cooperation of the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

Referring to Magnolia, which dates back well over 250 years, John Galsworthy, celebrated British author has written (Century

Magazine): "I specialize in gardens, and freely assert that none in the world is so beautiful as this. Even before the azaleas come out, it consigns the Boboli at Florence, the Cinnamon Gardens at Colombo, Conception at Malaga, Versailles, Hampton Court, the Generalife at Granada, and La Mortala to the category of 'also ran'."

Owen Wister wrote (Harper's Magazine): "I have seen gardens in England, France, and Italy. . . but no horticulture I have seen devised by mortal man approaches the unearthly enchantment of the azaleas at Magnolia Gardens."

Otherworld Mystery

Cypress Gardens, newest of the three gardens, is bound by no traditions, and today captures the otherworldly mystery and beauty of a Stygian purgatory after a Luther Burbank and all the other great horticulturists of the past had taken over. The inky waters, tintured by the giant moss-draped cypresses, reflect as on a polished black mirror the blazing masses of azaleas which fringe the unforgettable lagoons.

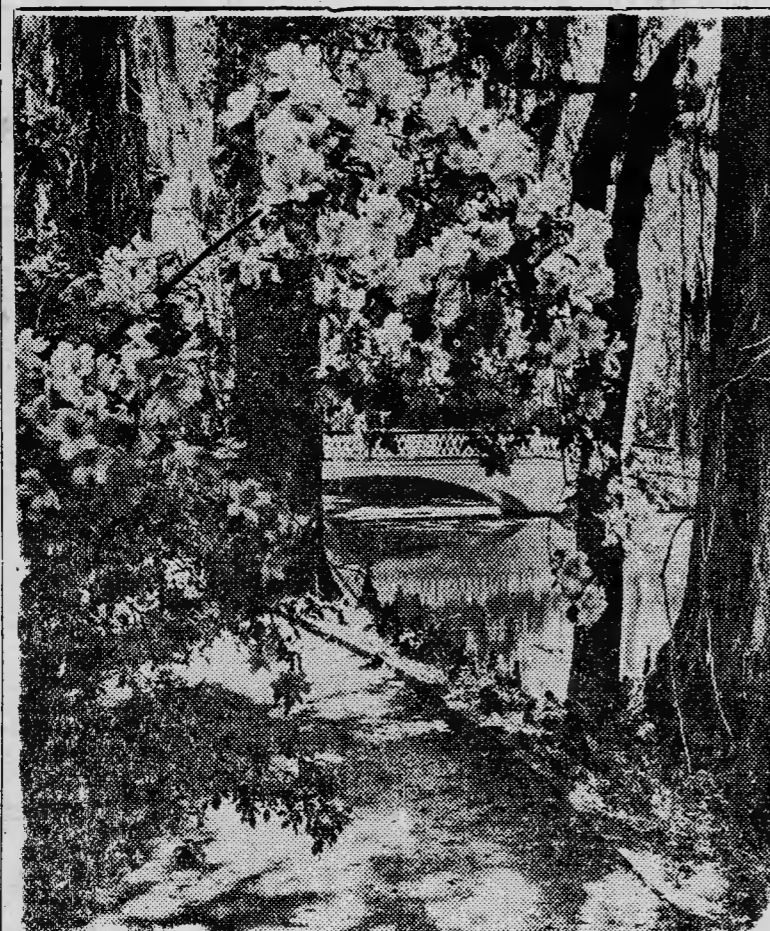
Although most visitors find the best way to enjoy Cypress is to relax in a small boat and "row through the rainbows," the scenic paths are well marked. And a new project this year—in addition to vast new plantings—is a decorative sign here and there giving data on the various plants.

Shaffer in his "Carolina Gardens" writes: "Here at Cypress Gardens a sensation awaits the visitor that will remain forever in his memory. . . One may for a moment recall descriptions of the somber river that flows between this and another world, but instantly the vision changes to one of paradise regained. On every hand rise the magic isles of the blest."

The three gardens have recently announced a bargain joint rate for the azalea season.



In Middleton Gardens, America's outstanding landscaped garden, you can walk through veritable canyons of flowers. Its famed terraces took 100 slaves 10 years to build. Here were planted the first camellias in America.



An intimate vista in Magnolia Gardens, Charleston, S. C., which has been a mecca for garden lovers for more than a century. Even before the War Between the States, Baedeker's Guide indicated with stars three "musts" in America: Niagara Falls, Grand Canyon, and Magnolia Gardens.



No other garden in the world is like Cypress Gardens, near Charleston, S. C., whose cypress-tinted inky waters reflect blazing masses of azaleas. To slide through its fabulous flower-fringed lagoons is to make an otherworldly visit, an enchanting experience never to be forgotten.

Glee Club Concert Planned March 19

A concert will be given by the West Southern Pines glee club Sunday, March 19, at 4 p. m. at Emmanuel Episcopal church, under sponsorship of the Council of Social Agencies.

The concert is being held to bring to Southern Pines residents an example of the work of what is considered one of the best glee clubs of the county, also to help the West Southern Pines school in its effort to outfit its band with uniforms. There will be no admission charge, but a voluntary offering will be taken at the concert

for this purpose. A fund for the school band uniforms has been started by West Southern Pines churches and other organizations.

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Southern Seniors Play At Mid Pines

The Southern Seniors Golf association will open its 1950 playing season at the Mid-Pines club near Southern Pines on Sunday, March 12, when the members play a one-day, 18 hole medal play event with full Association handicaps. This is the earliest opening that the Southern Seniors have had in their 20-year history and inaugurates a fine eight or nine tournament schedule which will take them to some of the finest courses in North Carolina.

This organization has over 150 paid members for 1950, which is far ahead of the 1949 record at this time, according to Chester I. Williams, executive secretary.

A large field is expected for the Mid-Pines event with around 20 players due from Wilmington, four or five foursomes from Pinehurst, one or two foursomes from New Bern, Raleigh, Greensboro and High Point, as well as many players from Charlotte, Hickory, Sanford, Fayetteville and Southern Pines.

All golfers who have passed their 50th birthday and are members of a recognized Golf Club or association are eligible to join the Southern Seniors and a cordial invitation is extended to all members of the Tin Whistles club and the Sandpipers club who qualify to join and play at Mid-Pines on Sunday, March 12. Membership application blanks may be secured from the Pro at Mid - Pines or the Pine Needles club, as well as at the desk at the Pinehurst Country club or from Chester I. Williams, P. O. Box 589, Pinehurst.

Competition will be in age groups and there will be a prize for low net in each group as well as low gross and low net in the field. A feature will be a 9-hole tournament for the benefit of those who play only nine holes and a prize will be awarded to low net in this event.

Petition Seeks State Observance Of Good Friday

A petition to Governor W. Kerr Scott, requesting a statewide Good Friday observance, is being circulated in Southern Pines and this week had gathered a large number of signatures of businessmen and others of the town.

The petition seeks the setting aside of the hours from 12 noon to 3 p. m. of Good Friday, April 7, as a special time of prayer and recollection, to be observed by the closing of schools at this time and also the closing of places of business (except those of essential public service) and amusement centers.

A copy of the petition is in Broad Street pharmacy where it may be seen by anyone caring to add his signature, said John Buchholz, president of the local unit of the N. C. Catholic laymen's association, sponsor of the movement.

The effort is said also to have the support of other denominations in a cooperative effort to bring home the significance of Good Friday to the people of the state, in a world which in many places is declining from the recognition of God and invocation of His name.

About one-half of the forest land in North Carolina is stocked with timber less than 40 years old.