

Hobby Sets Her Lawn Ablaze With Color

Story & Photos by Lib Stewart



PRETTY PICTURE — The flower gardens at the Marlon Dixon home off Shelby Road are picturesque at this season of the year. Some of Violet Dixon's handiwork are pictured.



COLOR GROUPINGS — Christmas Cheers form a border among the pine trees with a background of dogwoods, an ideal setting for the many azaleas that Violet Dixon has used to enhance her gardens.

Violet Dixon will tell you that her favorite hymn is "God Who Toucheth Earth With Beauty" and when you visit her flower garden off Shelby Rd. you will understand why.

Spring is the beautiful season of the year at the home of Violet and Marlon Dixon and their yard is abloom with 1,000 colorful azaleas which Mrs. Dixon has enjoyed as a hobby for 20 years.

Veteran interviewer since 1948 at the Employment Security Commission here, Mrs. Dixon, native of Kings Mountain, got her green thumb from her parents but was introduced to the azalea hobby by a co-worker, Ginny Moss (Mrs. James) Gibson when she fell in love with Christmas Cheers and flowering Hexe at the Gibson home. Violet said she went home immediately and planted Christmas Cheers among the pine trees at the lower edge of her front yard. After that, she started buying a few plants each Fall and Spring and soon her husband and friends knew exactly what gift to buy for anniversaries. Soon, her yard was full of gorgeous azaleas against a background of pine trees, dogwoods and camellias.

Mrs. Dixon, who shares her flowers with her friends and local churches, including her own, Kings Mountain Baptist, says there's a magic about her hobby. "When I'm troubled or blue, I never need a tranquilizer," says Violet. "I get among my azaleas and flowers, begin digging or mulching and the depression soon passes."

She recommends that other friends try her hobby but cautions them that the secret of successful gardening, she believes, is sharing with friends and neighbors.

Mrs. Dixon's husband, Marlon, also a Kings Mountain native and building contractor, admits he doesn't help much with the flowers but respects his wife's hobby and keeps the woods in the background cleared of grass and debris and helps Mrs. Dixon haul dirt and transplant dogwood trees.

The Dixon home is situated in an ideal setting for azalea growing with a background of pine trees and dogwoods, as these flowers love acid soil and a mulch of pine needles and the shade and filtering sunlight are ideal.

Some azaleas get hurt by the cold of winter, but Violet soon learned the types best suited to our climate. Occasionally, she has had to move some types to more protected areas in order for them to produce abundant blooms. These plants can be moved successfully most any time of the year, if you remember to shovel a large amount of dirt under the plants and water well. However, she moves her plants mainly in the months from October through April, usually selecting a damp, rainy day. Some of her favorites are Hino, Christmas Cheer, Hexe, Red Wing, Pink Coral Belle, Pink Pericat, Snow, Rosebud, Formosa, President Clay and others. Color groups of red and white or pink and white which bloom at the same time are beautiful together, such as Christmas Cheer, Hino and Snow Azaleas. Pink coral belles and Snows are beautiful together and different shades of pink

are also suggested for your garden. Solid orchids or purple beds make pretty showings. At one side of the Dixon yard are President Clays. Below the house are two orchid beds. Nothing is more beautiful than to plant red or pink azaleas among white dogwoods, says Mrs. Dixon.

When Violet Dixon began her hobby she said she began reading materials regarding their growth and care. One of her favorite columns was written weekly by Mrs. L. L. Huffman in The Charlotte Observer. She advocated watering azaleas at least six inches deep during hot, dry seasons and a three inch mulch of pine needles, oak leaves or old sawdust, but preferably pine needles. Do not put hot fertilizers, such as cow manure, around them and don't dig around them as azaleas root grow near the top of the ground and digging will soon kill them.

To propagate, Violet buries part of a long limb on the ground, places dirt and a large rock around them and come Spring will be a new plant

She also "air layers" on top of the plant during the blooming season or just after blooming, using root tone, old moss around the trees soaked in water, wrapping the scraped part of the stem and moss with plastic. Nice plants are produced in this way and will bloom the next season.

Violet always attends Southeastern Garden Show in Charlotte to learn more about color groupings and has used some of their suggestions in her own yard.

Daughter, Sheila, senior student at UNCC, doesn't participate in her mother's hobby but enjoys it. Other member of the Dixon family is daughter, Elaine (Mrs. Jay) Powell, Jr. of West Columbia S. C.

Mrs. Dixon has shared her flowers with her daughter and son-in-law and their two children, Stephanie, age two, and Shannon, five months, and when the Powells moved from Georgia recently to South Carolina, they left behind their mother's handiwork for the new owners to enjoy, a yard ablaze with colorful azaleas.



ENJOYS HOBBY — Violet Dixon stands in the yard of her home off Shelby Rd. which is ablaze this season of the year with colorful azaleas. She recommends her gardening hobby. "Try it, You'll like it," she tells her friends.

Spring Welcomed With Show

Open Gate Garden Clubbers are inviting Kings Mountain area citizens to "Welcome Sweet Springtime," a flower show featuring table settings of exquisite china, silver and crystal with floral arrangements, May 8 from 10 a. m. until 5 p. m. at Dellinger's Jewel Shop on West Mountain St.

The show is free and all Kings Mountain garden clubs will provide table decorations and arrangements to be judged by out-of-town judges. Prizes will be awarded to first, second, and third place winners.

A feature of the day's activities, which are free and open to the public, will be a spring luncheon at Kings Mountain Country Club with serving from noon until 1:30 p. m. Cost of the luncheon is \$3.50. Individual tables will be decorated in various periods of history with appropriate settings and centerpiece enhancing the motif.

Over 100 invitations have gone out and include poetry by A. Rubinstein which reads: "Welcome Sweet Springtime", We greet them in song, flowerets awake ye, burst into bloom; Springtime is come and

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sweet summer is nigh, Sing, then ye birds O sing."

ENGAGEMENT
ANNOUNCED

Mr. and Mrs. T. L. Bumgarner of Dallas announce the engagement of their daughter, Debra Ann, to James Buford Ware, Jr., son of Mr. and Mrs. James Buford Ware of Kings Mountain.

The bride-to-be is a graduate of North Gaston High School and Cameo Beauty College.

The prospective bridegroom is a graduate of Kings Mountain Senior High School, Gaston College and Mississippi State University.

Our Saviour Lutheran Church of Dallas will be setting the couple's wedding on June 18th at 7 p. m. in the evening.

IT'S A BOY

Mr. and Mrs. Gene Huntsinger, 605 Southwoods Dr., announce the arrival of their second son, Todd Dwayne, April 10th, Cleveland Memorial Hospital, Shelby.

The baby weighed eight pounds, 18 ounces and is grandson of Mr. and Mrs. Palmer Smith and Mr. and Mrs. William Huntsinger, all of Kings Mountain. Other member of the family is two-year old Chad Eugene Smith.

Mrs. Huntsinger is the former Janet Smith.



SPRING SCENE — Violet Dixon is almost hidden by the colorful azaleas blooming in her yard off Shelby Rd. The Kings Mountain woman's

hobby of 20 years has produced more than one thousand azaleas which she shares with friends and neighbors.