

Potomac Valley & MAC ARS - North Carolina Nursery Trip

March 4 – March 6, 2016

I am not sure how many of you are planning to go on our annual field trip to nurseries in Southern Virginia and North Carolina. The trip is very informal and people arrange their own transportation and hotel reservations. Having discussed details with George McLellan recently, we are suggesting an alternate itinerary and hotel choice.

For over a decade we have used the Comfort Inn - Garner, NC, as our base of operation for two nights, Friday and Saturday. Due to Friday afternoon traffic around Raleigh-Durham, George suggests staying at the Baymont Inn & Suites in Sanford, NC, instead. He stayed there last year and said it was fine and avoided the traffic mess.

George's group will be going directly to a wholesale camellia supplier, Cam Too Nursery in Greensboro, NC, on Friday morning. The place is huge with 30 acres of hoop houses. They do not sell retail, so orders must be placed in advance. His group will then visit Camellia Forest Nursery that afternoon, and then head south to Sanford. Most of us planned to go to Pine Knot Farms in the morning, and then to Camellia Forest in the afternoon. George warns that the route from Chapel Hill to Garner can take two to three hours on a Friday since traffic around Raleigh-Durham can be as bad as DC. People may stay in Garner if they choose, but George has convinced me to stay in Sanford:

Baymont Inn & Suites – Sanford
2614 S. Horner Blvd.
Sanford, NC 27330
(919)-708-7400

Comfort Inn – Garner
126 Cleveland Crossing Drive
Garner, NC 27529
(919) 773-1110

Having looked at the routes, it does make more sense to head south to Sanford from Chapel Hill since we will be visiting Big Bloomers in that area on Saturday morning. We will still go to Plant Delights in the afternoon, and then people can either spend the night in Garner or head directly for home. There is also a possibility of snow on Friday, so plans may still change. If you are planning to go, let us know so we can keep you updated on any changes:

Don Hyatt - Don@donaldhyatt.com (email)
George McLellan

Friday morning: March 4, 2016

Pine Knot Farms (Hours: 10 am – 4 pm)
681 Rockchurch Rd, Clarksville, VA 23927
www.pineknotfarms.com

Target time at Pine Knot: 10:00 am to 12:00 noon
Approximate travel time from DC: 4 hours

On Friday morning, we try to visit Pine Knot Farms for their Hellebore Festival. Dick and Judith Tyler specialize in hellebores but they often have plants from others like John Lonsdale's hardy cyclamens. Some GPS systems may suggest heading west via VA-58 around the Kerr Reservoir, but we have found it better to continue on I-85 into North Carolina, take exit 214, and head back on NC-39 to Pine Knot Farms.



Hellebore Selections at Pine Knot

Friday afternoon: March 4, 2016

Camellia Forrest Nursery (9 am - 5 pm)
9701 Carrie Road, Chapel Hill, NC 27516
www.camforest.com

Target time at Nursery: 1:30 to 3:30 pm
Travel time from Pine Knot: 1.5 hours

David Parks and his mother often opened Camellia Forest Nursery for our group on Sundays but his mother passed away



Pale Yellow Camellia 'Lemon Glow'

recently. The nursery will only be open Friday and Saturday, so we will try for Friday. From Pine Knot, we will return to I-85 and head south to via Rt. 25 to Chapel Hill, and then head West on NC-54 to the nursery. Camellia Forest is well known for their extensive camellia collection, but they also have other rare plants like the flowering plum tree (*Prunus mume*), woody shrubs like *Edgeworthia chrysantha*, heat tolerant primroses, unusual evergreens and more. After spending an hour or two at the nursery, people can decide whether to spend 2+ hours in traffic to get to Garner via I-40 or to drive one hour south to Sanford via NC-15.

Approximate travel time to Garner: 2+ hours
Approximate travel time to Sanford: 1 hour



Edgeworthia chrysantha

Prunus mume

Saturday morning: March 5, 2016

Big Bloomers Flower Farm (8:30 am – 5 pm)
275 Pressly Foushee Road, Sanford, NC 27330
www.bigbloomersflowerfarm.com

Target time at Big Bloomers: 8:30 – 10:30 am

On Saturday morning, we usually go to Big Bloomers in the morning and Plant Delights Nursery in the afternoon. By spending the night in Sanford, we can save the hour we normally spent traveling south from Garner.

Big Bloomers has thousands of varieties of plants at relatively inexpensive prices. They have 17 greenhouses covering nearly 30,000 sq. ft, and each section is packed with plants, often organized by growing requirements. They have larger plants in 4-inch to gallon pots such as iris, grasses, hostas, hellebores, daylilies, ferns, wildflowers, plants for sun, plants for shade, house plants, and some woody plants like hydrangeas and quince selections. They sell market packs of perennial starts and bedding plants, as well as garden ornaments. Be sure you save room for Big Bloomers!



Vista in a Greenhouse at Big Bloomers

Saturday afternoon: March 5, 2016

Plant Delights Nursery (8:00 am – 5:00 pm)
9241 Sauls Road, Raleigh, NC 27603
www.plantdelights.com

Target time at Plant Delights: 12:00 – 2:00 pm
Travel time from Sanford: 1 hour

Tony Avent’s Plant Delights Nursery is one of the best sources for rare herbaceous perennials, and rare wildflowers. He carries premium plants and some may be pricey, but plant aficionados usually don’t mind paying for quality. Tony spends much time trying to find rare plants to offer, and may have plants that you never even knew existed. He carries superior selections of standard perennials, too, and I have gotten some of my best double hellebores from him. For shade, try hellebores, cypripedium orchids, arisaemas, epimediums, trilliums, ferns, and hostas. Hos recommendations for sun include agaves, baptisias, yuccas, grasses, iris, and more. He will often have a few woodies like the bright yellow foliage plant, *Illicium* ‘Florida Sunshine’. Enjoy his ever-expanding display gardens and say “Hi” to Tony who is usually in the garden near his house.



Huge Agave and Yellow Illicium at Tony’s Home