



Cape Fear Garden Club
Azalea Garden Tour

Media Release

55th Annual Azalea Garden Tour Features “Gardens from the River to the Sea”

The annual **Azalea Garden Tour** is sure to delight visitors once again with this year's theme “**Gardens from the River to the Sea**” highlighting the beauty of the Cape Fear Region's coastal and river landscapes. Sponsored by **Cape Fear Garden Club, Inc.**, the tour is **April 11, 12, and 13, 2008** in **Wilmington, North Carolina**. One of the longest running and most popular garden tours in the South, the tour changes each year with the selection of different gardens. According to Tour Chairman Donna Pendergrast, the eleven gardens chosen for this year's tour “reflect the interesting variety of gardens our area offers from sweeping lawns with backdrops of azaleas to panoramic views of the Intracoastal Waterway”.

The Azalea Garden Tour opens **Friday, April 11th** with the colorful **Ribbon Cutting Ceremony** at the Governor Dudley Mansion. Located in the historic downtown and overlooking the Cape Fear River, the 1825 mansion was home to North Carolina's first elected governor Edward B. Dudley. The walled grounds feature towering oaks, fountains and statuary framed with a variety of plantings. **Queen Azalea LXI** and her court preside over the ceremony. **Summerall Guards**, the Citadel's elite senior drill team, escort over 100 beautiful **Azalea Belles** dressed in authentic antebellum gowns. Local and national celebrities are also present to celebrate the event. Following the ceremony, members of the Cape Fear Garden Club serve refreshments and hundreds of homemade cookies.

The remaining ten gardens offer visitors a variety of unique gardens in several settings. Downtown area gardens showcase historic city gardens. Visitors will especially enjoy the Biblical garden of First Presbyterian Church featuring a crape myrtle planted by Woodrow Wilson's mother and surrounded by plants and flowers mentioned in the Bible. The glorious colors of azaleas highlight the established gardens of the Forest Hills area. Always a must see with visitors are the lush gardens in the Landfall area. In addition, all types of home architecture, from federal to low country, make the tour an adventure to remember. Azalea Belles welcome visitors in each of gardens during the tour.

Presale tickets are available beginning January 22 for the discounted price of \$15. After March 1, tickets are \$20. Tickets are good for all three days; children under twelve are admitted free except to the Ribbon Cutting Ceremony where a \$1.00 fee is charged. The ticket includes a map for a self-guided tour with descriptions of each garden. Gardens are open 10:00am to 6pm daily. As an added bonus, tickets include free admission to the exquisite **Airlie Gardens** on the Saturday, April 12.

Over the past 55 years, Azalea Garden Tour profits have funded thousand of dollars of **beautification and horticulture grants** in New Hanover County. In 2007, Cape Fear Garden Club awarded over \$100,000. Funds also support **scholarships** at the University of North Carolina at Wilmington and Cape Fear Community College and finance conservation efforts at **Battery Island**, a **National Audubon Society** bird sanctuary.

The **55th Annual Azalea Garden Tour, April 11-13, 2008**, is an official event of the North **Carolina Azalea Festival**. For additional information visit www.azaleagardentour.org.

For questions/media opportunities contact:

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