



July 13, 2017

Below: We love you, Maggie; Bigger than life; Tops in tennis; Happy birthday, Etowah; Clippity-clop; Relax and renew; Hit the beach – and stay; peachy-keen.

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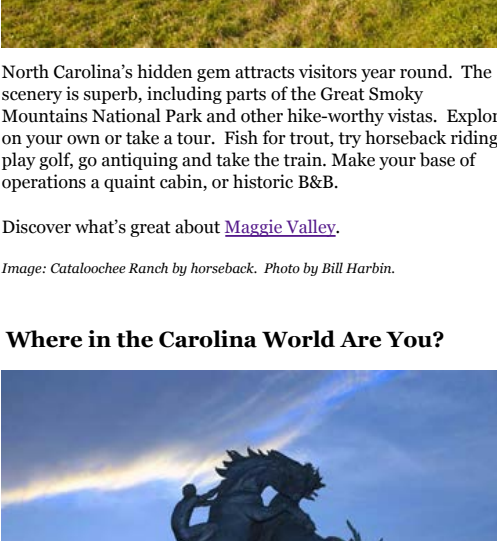
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Take a Road Trip to Maggie Valley



North Carolina's hidden gem attracts visitors year round. The scenery is superb, including parts of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park and other hike-worthy vistas. Explore on your own or take a tour. Fish for trout, try horseback riding, play golf, go antiquing and take the train. Make your base of operations a quaint cabin, or historic B&B.

Discover what's great about [Maggie Valley](#).

Image: Cataloochee Ranch by horseback. Photo by Bill Harbin.

Charlotte's Best New Active Adult Community

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Where in the Carolina World Are You?



Awestruck!

The sheer power portrayed in these magnificent creatures gives a tiny foreshadowing of what you'll see inside. A favorite coastal haunt of history enthusiasts and art lovers. Hint: Children love it, too. [Where are you?](#)

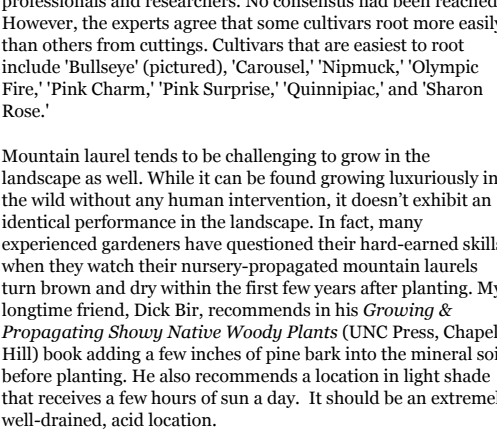
Relax & Unwind

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Carolina Grown



The Hills Are Alive Mountain Laurel Is Worth the Effort

by Bob Polomski, Ph.D.

Considered by many to be one of the most beautiful flowering evergreen shrubs or small trees in North America, mountain laurel's native range extends from New England to the Florida panhandle and west to Indiana. It's widely distributed in the mountains with smaller natural populations in the Piedmont and Coastal Plain.

The springtime flowers, each 3/4 to 1 in. wide, are massed in 4-6 inch-wide inflorescences that range from white to pink and crimson and purple. The evergreen foliage is used in winter holiday decorations. Over time it can reach a height and width of 12 to 15 ft. with a gnarled, picturesque trunk. The 2-5 inch long leaves emerge bronze and mature to lustrous dark green.

Unfortunately, mountain laurel is one of the more difficult plants to propagate in the nursery trade. Over the years an assortment of approaches have been proposed by nursery professionals and researchers. No consensus had been reached. However, the experts agree that some cultivars root more easily than others from cuttings. Cultivars that are easiest to root include 'Bulseye' (pictured), 'Carousel,' 'Nipmuck,' 'Olympic Fire,' 'Pink Charm,' 'Pink Surprise,' 'Quinnipiac,' and 'Sharon Rose.'

Mountain laurel tends to be challenging to grow in the landscape as well. While it can be found growing luxuriously in the wild without any human intervention, it doesn't exhibit an identical performance in the landscape. In fact, many experienced gardeners have questioned their hard-earned skills when they watch their nursery-propagated mountain laurels turn brown and dry within the first few years after planting. My longtime friend, Dick Bir, recommends in his *Growing & Propagating Showy Native Woody Plants* (UNC Press, Chapel Hill) book adding a few inches of pine bark into the mineral soil before planting. He also recommends a location in light shade that receives a few hours of sun a day. It should be an extremely well-drained, acid location.

Avoid the urge to apply copious amounts of fertilizer. Unlike the tomatoes, peppers, and okra in your vegetable garden, mountain laurel is a light feeder that can be harmed with excessive fertilizer applications.

Mountain laurel or calico-bush may be a tad persnickety in the landscape, but the extravagant flowers are worth your time and effort.

Photo by Bob Polomski, Ph.D.

OTHER CAROLINA GROWN PLANTS

Learn more about Carolina gardening from Dr. Polomski's new book, [Carolinans Month by Month Gardening](#).

Available wherever books are sold.

That moment when... yeah, you know the one

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Nature's Playground

Hey,

We're just back from biking the fresh green hills in the French countryside of Burgundy. Beautiful indeed and lots of fun. But now, back at home, we've enjoyed bike routes just as lovely in the Carolinas – the Brevard area, the Palmetto Trail of SC and the Mountains to Sea Trail in NC.

Fact is, the Carolinas have it all – coast, mountains and everything in between. Our trails are a worthy addition to your bucket list. The rest of our summer includes time spent with family and friends, heading up thru Clemson to the Blue Ridge Mountains, for the Brevard breweries and over to the spectacular auction weekend at Penland School of Arts ... to drink in the creativity that seems to connect at higher altitudes.

Many visit for golf, tennis, mountain biking, or water sports. Beach reads offer brain candy for easy afternoons on our wide, sandy, waterfront playgrounds – and we have talented writers who capture the spirit of place in their locally-grown novels.

Come experience the best of life – jobs, low taxes and real estate bonanzas driving your search for a new or second home. Check out our lifestyle options. [Pedestrian Power](#), [Garden Living](#) and [Urban Living](#), for those who crave the energy that comes with vibrant downtowns.

Use the 375+ pages at CarolinaLiving.com to create your own Carolina stories and memories!

Seyla & Patrick Mason

Co-Founders

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Relax Well



Refresh & Recharge

The [Omni Grove Park Inn](#), famous for their 43,000-square-foot subterranean spa, is introducing an innovative Relax Well Pod Treatment to their lineup of invigorating spa treatments. From the luxurious subterranean spa pool and unique indoor and outdoor wellness offerings, you can refresh and recharge this summer in the Blue Ridge Mountains.

You will soothe your soul with more than 20 water features (and 6,500 fiber optic stars). Check out their programs to fit individual needs. Comfortable, first class. And did we mention Asheville in the summer? Perfection.

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Love the equestrian lifestyle?

We do, too. (And no, you don't have to own a horse to appreciate them and enjoy being around equestrian events.) Check out Seabrook Island's horseback riding tours, and share your favorite ways to enjoy these beautiful creatures. Want more?

The Fall/Winter print edition of CarolinaLiving.com will include a feature on the equestrian lifestyle in the Carolinas. Saddle up and share where you'd like to go with your own Black Beauty!

Please share with us on [Facebook](#).

Heading your way

carolinainliving.com

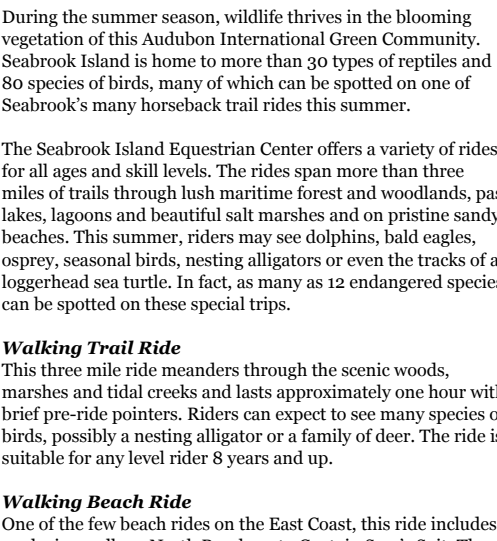
Let's Take a Road Trip

Carolina Famous Faces

Insider Info

Adventures

Life's a Beach



WalletHub recently announced their take on the best beach towns for all ages and for golfers, an endless supply of courses. Foodies love the restaurants and shoppers have so many options. What's better than taking your boat down the Intracoastal Waterway for dinner?

Southport: Reminds some of a New England fishing village, but it's definitely southern to its core. Pretty, with St. James Plantation close by for a great lifestyle option.

Wrightsville Beach: Hopping in summer, but nice all year. Just next door to Wilmington, NC but with a completely different feel.

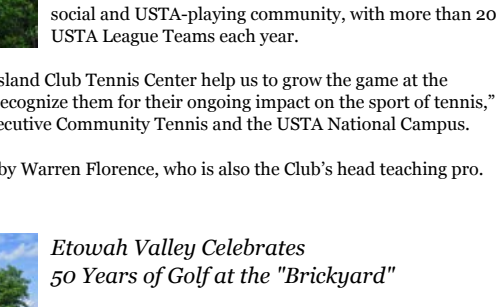
New Bern, NC: On the Pamlico Sound. Walkable, friendly, historic and much-loved by old timers and newcomers.

Edenton, NC: Recently named by Forbes.com as one of America's "prettiest towns," she carries her age very well indeed. Add history and charm to this beauty, located on Albemarle Sound in North Carolina's Inner Banks, as well as the friendly people, and you may be tempted.

Elizabeth City, NC: Another terrific town, with a thriving community heartbeat and lots to see and do. On the waters of Albemarle Sound, this beauty has its own unique culture – one of America's "Best Small Towns."

Photo: Southport-Bald Head Island (NC) Ferry Boat docking at landing near homes and marina in harbor at dusk. VisitNC.com

Wildlife by Horseback



Seabrook Island

[Seabrook Island](#), a coastal barrier island just miles from historic Charleston, offers horseback tours that are an exceptional way to see and learn about the island's natural habitat.

During the summer season, wildlife thrives in the blooming vegetation of this Audubon International Green Community. Seabrook Island is home to more than 30 types of reptiles and 80 species of birds, many of which can be spotted on one of Seabrook's many horseback trail rides this summer.

The Seabrook Island Equestrian Center offers a variety of rides for all ages and skill levels. The rides span more than three miles of trails through lush maritime forest and woodlands, past lakes, lagoons and beautiful salt marshes and on pristine sandy beaches. This summer, riders may see dolphins, bald eagles, osprey, seasonal birds, nesting alligators or even the tracks of a loggerhead sea turtle. In fact, as many as 12 endangered species can be spotted on these special trips.

Walking Trail Ride
This three mile ride meanders through the scenic woods, marshes and tidal creeks and lasts approximately one hour with brief pre-ride pointers. Riders can expect to see many species of birds, possibly a nesting alligator or a family of deer. The ride is suitable for any level rider 8 years and up.

Walking Beach Ride
One of the few beach rides on the East Coast, this ride includes a relaxing walk on North Beach up to Captain Sam's Spit. These riders may see dolphins strand feeding, a technique where dolphins herd schools of fish onto the sloping beach then nearly beach themselves by sliding out of the water to seize their catch. Riders can also expect to see bald eagles, osprey and even the tracks of a loggerhead sea turtle. Appropriate for beginners, this ride highlights the beauty of Seabrook's miles of beaches and bountiful wildlife.

Advanced Beach Ride
This exhilarating ride on front beach is for advanced riders only. Horse enthusiasts will get a thrill walking, trotting and cantering on North Beach. Three years of experience is required. Participants can ride English or Western saddle.

The Seabrook Island Equestrian center also offers pony rides and riding lessons.

For more information about Seabrook Island's Equestrian Center or to book a ride, visit [www.discoverseabrook.com](#).

Carolina Cuisine



A peach of a state.

Sorry Georgia. You're a mighty fine neighbor and friend, but South Carolina has it all over you when it comes to peaches.

Ours is a good-natured rivalry, of course, but the bottom line is the peaches taste heavenly here and folks have been finding ways to pickle, freeze, bake and dry peaches for generations. It's all good.

For a taste that highlights the freshness of our juicy fruit, consider this recipe for [Peach Salsa](#), courtesy the SC Peach Council. You'll love it – but save room for old-fashioned peach ice cream, hand-churned, of course.

NEWSWORTHY

Timely Events & Promotions

Planning a trip? Looking for fun & deals?



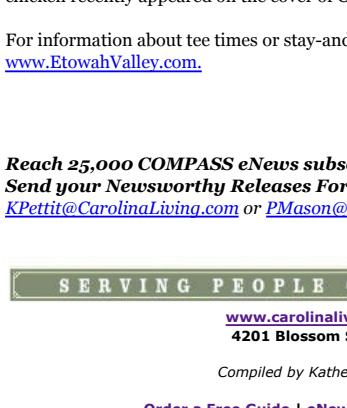
USTA Names Dataw Island Club's Tennis Center One of the Best in the Country

The [Dataw Island Club Tennis Center](#) in St. Helena Island, S.C., is one of just 12 winners in the 36th annual USTA Facility Awards program.

Dataw Island Club Tennis Center is home to an active social and USTA-playing community, with more than 20 USTA League Teams each year.

"Great tennis facilities like the Dataw Island Club Tennis Center help us to grow the game at the grass-roots level, and we are proud to recognize them for their ongoing impact on the sport of tennis," said Kurt Kamperman, USTA Chief Executive Community Tennis and the USTA National Campus.

The Dataw Island Tennis Center is led by Warren Florence, who is also the Club's head teaching pro.



Etowah Valley Celebrates 50 Years of Golf at the "Brickyard"

A golf course that sprang from unique beginnings celebrates its 50th anniversary this summer.

Etowah Valley Golf & Resort, which transformed the hard-scrabble terrain of a brick mining operation into a popular mountain golf destination, opened to much of a long and challenging 18-hole layout and crafted nine more holes in 1988.

The resort now spreads across 246 manicured acres with 27 holes of golf, 65 lodge rooms, three restaurants, a 200-seat banquet facility and a 200-seat outdoor pavilion. The lodging component has been upgraded as well. Each room received new furnishings and bathroom fixtures, high-definition flat screen televisions and high-speed Wi-Fi. All rooms on the property overlook the golf course.

On the hospitality side, Zeke's Greenside Tavern seats 160 and is open from 11am to 9pm seven days a week, with live entertainment throughout the week.

Old Etowah Smokehouse offers their popular pit-cooked barbecue, and the pickle-brined dipped chicken recently appeared on the cover of Garden & Gun.

For information about tee times or stay-and-play packages, call 828-891-7022 or go to [www.EtowahValley.com](#).

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