A sure sign that spring has arrived in Acadiana is the abundance of azaleas in a spectrum of reds, pinks, whites, purples and salmons. The Lafayette Jaycees are once again sponsoring the Azalea Trail, which runs from mid-March through mid-April. This has been an annual project for over 20 years for the Jaycees. Homeowners and businesses compete for the distinction of being recognized in their respective categories. Judging is scheduled for today, from noon to 3 p.m.

According to Marshall Mugnier, a local nursery owner, “This is the very beginning of the peak season, and weather permitting we should have a good 30 to 35 days (for prime viewing.)”

The azalea, a native of East Asia, was brought to the Gulf Coast over two centuries ago. Some of the largest plants found on the route are over 50 years old and have attained gigantic proportions. Azaleas come in a variety of sizes, from dwarf to jumbo. The predominant variety in

Contact the Chamber of Commerce or Tourist Information Center for more information.
Lafayette is the Formosa, christened the “General Lafayette.” The bloom of this species has a touch of lavender and fuschia. It is only one of 50 distinct species of the plant.

The Azalea Trail starts at Gateway, Lafayette’s Visitor Information Center located on Hwy. 167-Evangeline Thruway, and winds its way through nearly 20 miles of city streets. Follow the Azalea Trail signs on this self-guided tour or pick up maps at Gateway or other locations throughout the city.

For more information, call 232-3808.