



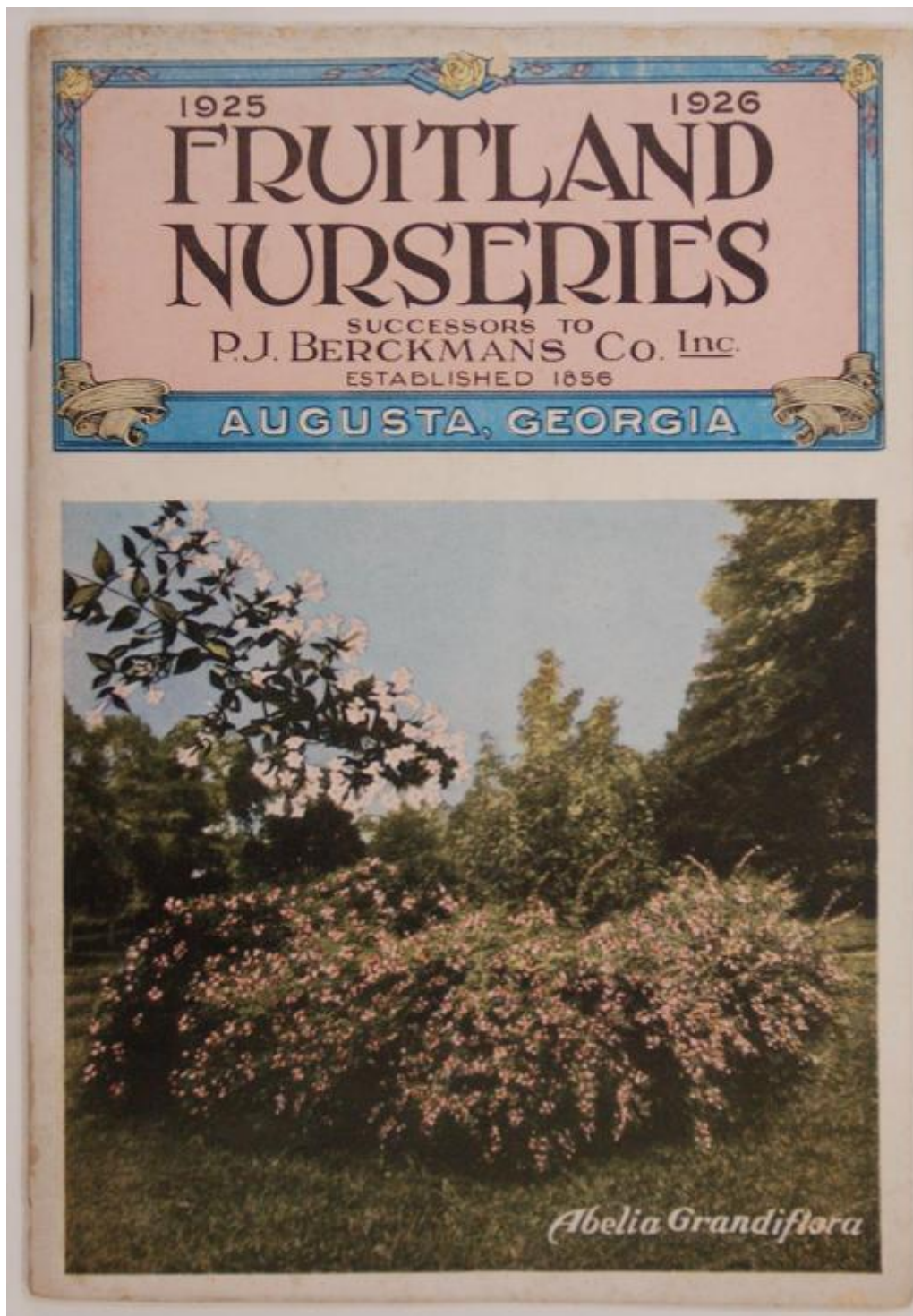
When Bobby Jones envisioned that Berckmans' Place (near Augusta, Georgia) could be transformed from a horticultural paradise into a golf paradise, he was right. The land was perfectly suited to become a golf course. But ... what was it like before the world's best golfers came to visit? Charles Price tells us the history in *A Golf Story* (split into paragraphs here for easier reading):

In 1857, a Belgian baron named Louis Mathieu Edouard Berckmans, who was an amateur horticulturist, purchased nearly four hundred acres on the western border of Augusta, Georgia, that had once been an indigo plantation [owned by Dennis Redmond], indigo having been one of the South's chief exports, along with cotton and rice, until the Civil War.

The plantation was said to have been the site where General James Edward Oglethorpe had sat about a cheery fire of pine knots and smoked the pipe of peace with the Cherokee Indians, thereby opening the way for Georgia to become a colony and, eventually, a state.

Berckmans's son, Prosper Julius Alphonse, was also a horticulturist, and a professional one at that, as well as an agronomist. Forming a partnership under the trade name of Fruitlands Nurseries, the two Berckmanses started what may have been the first commercial nursery in the South. It was certainly the largest.

A catalog they issued a few years after opening the nursery listed thirteen hundred varieties of pear and nine hundred varieties of apple. Additionally, they imported a number of trees and plants from all over the world, the progeny of which, nurtured at Fruitlands, ended up decorating the exterior of some of the South's grandest homes and plantations for the next half century.



Chief among their decorative plants was the azalea, which Prosper Berckmans popularized and which remains to this day the floral signature of everything below Mason and Dixon's Line. (A Golf Story, by Charles Price, at page 64.)



The azalea, even still, remains the "floral signature" on the former Berckmans' property. Today that land is known as the Augusta National Golf Club, host of the annual Masters Golf Tournament.



Click on the top image for a beautiful view.

Credits:

Image of flowering plants, including azaleas, at Augusta National Golf Club. Online, courtesy Ticket City.

In-text images:

The 1925-26 catalog for Fruitland Nurseries, together with the golf-course layout, are online courtesy Augusta National Golf Club.

In the flowering-image, by FidellvanS, we see the George Lindley Taber variety of azalea, which features a single flower from the same plant. Online via Wikimedia Commons; license: [CC BY-SA 3.0](#).)

See [Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:](#)

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/Bobby-Jones-and-Augusta-National-Golf-Club>

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Questions 2 Ponder

Does Changing the Use of Land Always Make Sense?

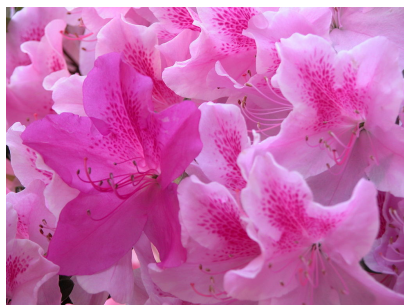
Once upon a time a piece of land, in today's Georgia, was the place where General James Oglethorpe smoked a peace pipe with the Cherokee. Later, that same land became a horticultural paradise. Today it's where the world's best golfers compete at The Master's.

As years—and centuries—pass by, the use of land changes. How do we decide what land-use is best? Should it be a collective decision made by the community's residents, or should developers have the right to decide?

If developers are allowed to make land-use changes, should those efforts be regulated? How?

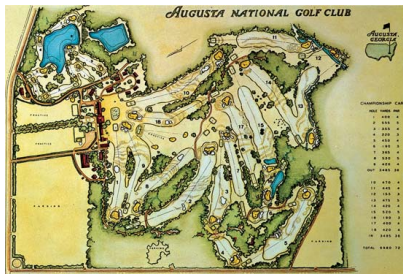
Are there certain places where growing flowers just has to continue? Why, or why not? Would you say that Augusta's National Golf Club is such a place?

Media Stream



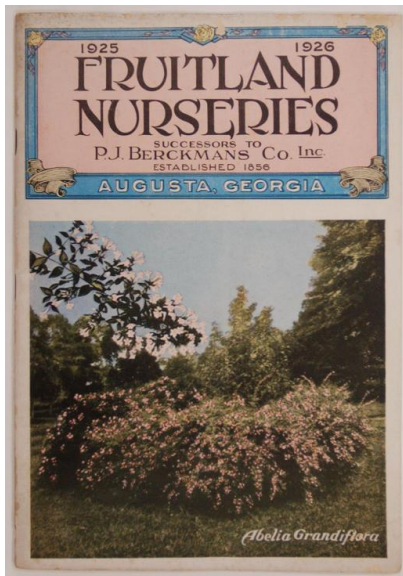
[Azalea - George Lindley Taber Variety](#)

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Augusta National Golf Course

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Augusta Golf - Fruitland Nurseries Catalog

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