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## THE COVER FLOWER

### (C. JAPONICA MUTANT 'ELEGANS SPLENDOR')

This is the story of the cover flower 'Elegans Champagne'. In the winter of 1972 Nuccio's Nurseries was preparing a shipment of camellias when they chanced to see a beautiful, cream colored, sport of 'Elegans Splendor' on one of the specimens to be sold! The mutant was removed from the plant and grafted on 2-gallon understock and hidden in the locked lath house on the back part of the nursery. The graft healed over nicely and the scion produced two vigorous green shoots. But, alas, ground squirrels, which sometimes forage in the nursery in the early summer, discovered the new shoots and ate them off completely! It looked as though there would be no yellow sport of 'Elegans Splendor'. However, tender care of the grafted scion produced new shoots and, in the spring of 1974 there were several of the butter yellow flowers. 1974-1975 witnessed a modest increase in grafted plants and a very successful trial of rooting cuttings of this mutant. The plant bloomed consistently with beautiful cream colored flowers. At the same time the unusual fimbriated leaves gave every evidence that a new mutant had, indeed, been found. 'Elegans Champagne' has a large to very large anemone form flower having a butter yellow center with cream petaloids. The plant has markedly fimbriated leaves and it has a low spreading growth. It was offered for sale in the fall of 1976.