

THE
Camellia
REVIEW

A Publication of the Southern California Camellia Society



'Lucky Star'

Vol. 57

September—October 1995

No. 1

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COVER PHOTO

'Lucky Star'

Photo: Grady Perigan. Color separation: courtesy of Nuccios' Nurseries

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THOUGHTS FROM THE EDITOR



It is with mixed feelings that I write what will be the last "Thoughts" from this Editor. In fact, I feel somewhat presumptuous writing my thoughts since Bobbie, my ever-supportive wife, has done all the work on this issue of the Review. She has carried the ball because I had an opportunity and did accept an assignment at the Polytechnic Staff Training Center in Batu Pahat, Johor, Malaysia. As some of you may know, Bobbie and I have spent several years on international technical education projects and have often said we would like one last assignment in a different culture. Even though we are officially retired, I think we were not ready to

move off the stage—rather like the old horse that's pulled a fire engine all his life. When he hears a siren, he's ready to roll.

Specifically, California State Polytechnic University, my home institution, joined forces with Purdue University and other Midwest universities to provide engineering faculty to help the University of Malaysia train faculty for Malaysia's rapidly expanding technical colleges. Malaysia has a booming economy that has outrun its trained work force. By the time you get your Review, Bobbie will probably have joined me in this interesting and beautiful country that sits just 3° north of the Equator. (Bobbie's note: I hope to be back and forth across the Pacific a couple of times during this assignment, and have an able assistant handling things in my absence. Dues, memorial gifts, Nomenclature orders, etc., can still be sent to the Brydon Road address and they will be properly cared for.)

I'm not sure how I'll survive without talking daily to my camellias, but hopefully they are being properly cared for and await our return for the 1997 camellia shows.

My thanks to the Southern California Camellia Society for giving me the opportunity to serve the past two years as your Editor. Thanks also to all of you who have made the job easy by submitting articles and papers. Special thanks to Mary Williams and her ever-ready camera for most of the candid shots you have enjoyed in the Review. Many thanks to those of you who have so faithfully responded to the call for the "over and above memberships"—they truly do help. My support and sincere best wishes to the next Editor.

—Melvin B. Belcher

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LET'S TOUT THIS CAMELLIA HOBBY

Marilee Gray

(Editor's note: This article was begun in December, 1994, and recently completed. Know, too, that Webster's definition of "tout" is "to publicize as being of great worth.")

The first show of the season was last week-end. It is traditionally held in early December at the Arboretum in Arcadia and is the one we call the "gib" show. It was, without a doubt,

partners work outside the home and have stringent career demands; increasing numbers of people live in apartments, condominiums, town houses, or mobile homes and have little space to give to a garden; the off-time for working people is limited and the demands on it are great. These sound like insurmountable problems for which we have no resolutions, yet



Is this group having fun. or what?

the smallest show that we have ever staged here in Southern California. I went out early Friday morning and picked everything that was open—all three blooms! On Saturday morning I found a couple more that had opened, at least partially, during the night. Everyone reported the same circumstances; the buds look tremendous, but the cool nights have delayed their opening. Despite this shortage of blooms, I returned home late Sunday afternoon with genuine elation over the success of the show. The blooms were few, true, but they were of good quality, and the head table was absolutely outstanding. We had presented the very best we could to the public under the circumstances, but the public's response to the show was so outstanding that, regardless of the bloom count, the show was a smashing success!

We are, admittedly, like most all horticultural societies, struggling to keep the membership rolls even, let alone make gains. The reasons are many. With many couples, both

the show visitors I spoke with gave me new insights that were nothing less than a revelation.

If we define the restrictions to membership using a different perspective from the one just stated, today's living presents not obstacles but opportunities for our camellia hobby. If we think we can hang declining membership on today's fast-paced living, then we are blind to the existing need for what we have to offer. First of all, people are no different now than they have always been—they will find time for whatever they feel is important—what is worth their time and effort. The challenge to our programming is apparent; nothing can stifle membership like a society whose activities are all directed inwardly to the existing membership. True, the competition for time may be a little greater now than it was a few decades ago, but we really can offer something that is both more stimulating than the T.V. and more relaxing than the couch in front of it.

Young, energetic people said that,

as they conscientiously work out at the gym for physical fitness, they retreat to the garden for the fitness of their mind and soul. There is no greater therapy, they said, than that found in the soil by the gardener. Therefore, those who



David Trujillo experiments with air layering

work under the greatest stress are those who need the gardening therapy the most and will derive the greatest benefit from it. Once this is discovered, they will find the time to pursue this enjoyable interest; exacting professional people do enjoy challenges and take particular delight in producing the degree of perfection that hobbyists seek. Where the possibility exists to devote more time to the garden, they will seize those opportunities. One need not, and should not, defer until retirement the pursuit of a garden hobby. Ideally, retirement is a time to expand an already established hobby.

Rather than agonize over the scant time that working couples have to give to a horticultural hobby, accept that, for now at least, their time is limited, so the efficient, effective use of time is imperative. Those who have long since rejected lawn maintenance as a rewarding pastime will have a resurgence of oneness with the land if their time is instead spent working with horticultural specimens that respond to their expertise. In fact, the reluctance to spend scarce off-time on

detestable garden chores is precisely what has driven so many working people into living situations without lawn and gardening responsibilities. The town house, condominium, or apartment dweller is likely to find that his available growing area about matches his available time—scarce to none. But wait, even pots on a balcony can contain a hobbyist's garden.

Have we sufficiently established the need and the potential for a hobbyist's garden? If so, then let us consider the advantages of the camellia. Unlike roses that are contained in a high-maintenance garden or orchids that demand a greenhouse that is costly to build and maintain, a camellia needs only a pot that can be placed in a spot with eastern or northern exposure or a shaded patio or balcony. If the only available area does not have the desired exposure, a little creativity can produce a suitable screen. Advantageously, anything that makes an area suitable for camellias also makes it more habitable and pleasant for people.

Few plants can equal the suitability of the camellia to pot culture, so, even though the camellias are superb plants to choose as a major component of a shade garden, they perform equally well if grown singly in a pot on a patio or balcony. Furthermore, they can remain potted indefinitely as they can readily be root pruned and returned to the same pot whenever the desired maximum pot size has been reached. One young couple bought some camellias and explained that they are living in an apartment but are growing plants for their first home. Beginning with some small camellias on the patio, they anticipate having valuable and showy plants of size and substance to plant once their dream of their own home is realized. In the meantime, their camellias will move with them wherever they go. Brilliant! Innovative! Who said young people



And after the tour "Ole."

Les and Jo Ann Brewer.



Above: Don and Marilee Grey, Mary Kay Mittag, and Nina Miller

Below: Jim McQuiston and Scottie Illes



are not interested or that our membership must necessarily be limited to homeowners?

Now, what is needed of our organizations' leaderships? Imagination and creativity. Those societies that are experiencing an increasing membership are the same ones that are attracting members from

the young couples crowd. Our most promising members—growers, exhibitors, and judges, alike—are coming from this group. Since the perpetuation of our societies resides with these newcomers, the importance of our social and educational programs cannot be overemphasized. We must conscientiously endeavor to present sufficient and diverse programs and events that will appeal to our long-standing members and our newer and/or younger members as well. For example, the Pomona Valley Society has an annual garden workshop in April that is consistently attended

almost entirely by interested parties and newer members. This is followed by a June garden tour, one of our most enthusiastically received events that emphasizes diversity. These tours have visited all types of gardens belonging to our long-time members and our newer members—from the meticulously landscaped to the purely functional, row-planted garden and from the spacious acreage to the confined, mobile home garden. Then, just to make the most of the event and give the desired social time, we end the day at a restaurant—usually Mexican! Ole! As garden tours have always proven to have wide appeal and to maximize interest and participation, this event is very well attended and much-anticipated.

Another challenge for our leadership is how to make the presence of the society known



Scottie Illes' beautiful shade structure throughout the community.

Obviously, our shows are our most impressive means of touting camellias, but after that, what? Any type of display at a mall, of course, is one option. Booths at all types of garden shows, whether they be at the floral department of the country fair or at commercial home and garden shows, offer good public exposure. One advantage of such a show over a mall is that those attending are a more select group and of greater potential because of a similar interest. Since societies need to limit their functions to the available time of its members, choose that activity or location that promises greater success by providing the greatest number of interested people and potential members.

The staffing of these shows and displays is the determining factor for success. You need people who are friendly and enthusiastic about their hobby first and an expert on camellias second. The first impression that comes from the friendly face is all-important; the technical information can come later. What is important is that we have members present and available to talk to the public whether it is at a camellia show or in a booth at a garden show. Can anyone explain why we go to the bother and expense of putting on a camellia show and then leave the show all but deserted once the judging and head table are

completed? A dedicated membership would find some who are willing and able to stay and use that valuable opportunity to talk to the public about camellias and the advantages of society membership. Unless we have several floor hosts and hostesses, we are doing all the work without securing any of the important benefits.

Any manner in which our societies serve our communities is not only fulfilling our obligations to our communities but is also helping to make our existence known. Therefore, any cooperative effort with arboreta or public gardens can be doubly productive. In this vein, Southern Cal has been offering an annual series of lecture/demonstrations on camellia culture at the Arboretum in Arcadia. We have gained new members through these sessions because, obviously, anyone who attends already has a definite interest. In addition, this past fall we began work on a shade garden with camellias donated from our membership. The work is planned to continue for several years with the development gradually extending throughout the length and breadth of several shaded acres. By next fall we intend to begin conducting our cultural sessions in this demonstration garden. We are particularly excited about the potential of this garden because the public never fails to become interested whenever they see us working in the public gardens.

Another avenue by which we can reach into various segments of our communities is to be available speakers for different organizations. The intent of such programs is merely to generate appreciation for camellias. Once the seed has been planted, who knows whether or not we may harvest new members from these programs?

One important aspect of all these contacts—camellia shows, garden shows, county fairs, arboreta lecture/demonstrations, organizational programs—is that we provide suitable literature. Our material typically includes the listing of the camellia



Jeanne Hunt warns Mel about "touching" her camellia.



But Mel didn't listen.

shows for the upcoming season, the various societies, their meeting dates and locations, names of people to contact for cultural information in different areas and for information on societies, and a form to return to request mailings. In addition, we include various culture sheets and, very importantly, past issues of *The Camellia Review*. With all this information to take home and peruse at their leisure, we have an extended opportunity to show the functions and purpose of our societies. All this printing can become costly, but it should be budgeted because, without this literature, we forfeit the opportunity to maximize the benefit from the display or program effort.

One distinct asset that we in Southern California have is the proximity of Nuccio's Nurseries. Their fame grows year by year. It is so exciting to ask of an audience who has been to Nuccio's and see the hands go up and the smiles appear. Whenever one talks of Nuccio's, it is always with a smile, never a frown. For those who have not been there, I assure them that they are the envy of the world, for Nuccio's is effectively in their own back yard. Just convincing someone that that is a treat they owe themselves is one step in the direction of a possible new camellia society member. The friendliness and the service that I know they will receive at Nuccio's is

another.

On the down side for membership, there is one problem of real concern. Particularly in Southern California, continually increasing traffic increases travel time and makes it a real challenge for some to actively participate in society events. To compound the problem, some societies have gone inactive and left areas without a local society. Obviously, people cannot participate in a distant society as much as they could in a local society. Pomona Valley has members who come from such a distance that it is not feasible for them to attend nighttime meetings, only daytime and weekend events. Is it possible that some societies might be reactivated and that more small, local societies could be formed? The potential members are there; it is just a matter of contacting them and offering a worthwhile program.

To summarize, this advocate of the camellia hobby thinks we have something tremendous to offer and would caution against using all the traditional excuses for a declining membership. It is the unsuccessful who succumb to such excuses; the successful society is the one who sees an opportunity where others find an excuse. Confronting our challenges is merely one of perspective. Let's recognize our advantages and tout this camellia hobby!

MY GARDEN

David Trujillo

In early January, 1994, while out nursery browsing, I happened to stop at Nuccio's Nurseries. Tom Nuccio greeted me and asked if he could help. My stock answer was, "Do you mind if I just look for now?" Tom said, "Certainly," and went on to help other people.

While I was there, Marilee Gray introduced herself and invited me to the Pomona Valley Camellia Society Show which would be held in February. After "chatting" about camellias with Marilee for nearly two hours, I left feeling very enthusiastic about a possible new hobby.

At the Pomona show I was again greeted by Marilee. I had never seen so many beautiful flowers in one place—miniatures to huge treated varieties. I was hooked!

After I went home I decided to build a 20' x 20' shade structure for a few camellias. Because of high winds from the

north and the scorching sun in the Etiwanda area of the Inland Valley, I constructed the east wall of translucent fiberglass panels attached to 2" x 4" frames. The cover is 70% shade cloth and redwood "privacy lattice panels" supported by 2" x 6" x 20' rafters. Corner supports are 12" diameter "telephone poles" buried 30" in the ground. Rows of flat concrete roofing tiles keep the potted plants off the bare ground.

I plumbed the area for drip irrigation but, during the culture segment at one of our meetings, Sergio Bracci told us that not all plants require the same amount of water—some plants need more water and

others need less. So my plants are hand watered, as needed.

An overhead sprinkling system is used to cool down the area during extremely hot days. It was not long before my 20' x 20' area was too small for my plants, and expansion began. Now the area is "L"-shaped—the original 20' x 20' plus another 16' x 60'.

The area is divided into four sections with 22 reticulatas and reticulata hybrids, 16 non-reticulata hybrids, 85 japonicas and 5 species all in alphabetical order; 15 sasanquas have also found a home in my garden. After potting nearly 100 seedlings, it looks as if expansion is in the near future.



Above: Dorothy Grier and Bobbie laugh about David's sign.



CALIFORNIA CAMELLIA-RAMA XXI

Mary Anne Ray

5024 E. Laurel Avenue, Fresno 93727 • (209)255-6277

November 3, 4 and 5, 1995 is CAMELLIA FUN AND CULTURE time at the TWENTY-FIRST CALIFORNIA CAMELLIA-RAMA in Fresno at the Sheraton-Smuggler's Inn, 3737 N. Blackstone, AND YOU AND YOUR FRIENDS ARE MOST CORDIALLY INVITED.

Friday CCCS members will host an "every-so-tasty" and "fun-to-be-with" evening in the Jamaica North Rooms 221-223.

Saturday (7:30 - 8:30 a.m.) enter your early camellia blooms in the show in Rooms 101-103—reticulatas, hybrids, japonicas (large, medium and boutonniere) and other species. Smuggler's and CCCS will provide trophies—one for the best of each category and one for the Best of Show.

Chairman Art Gonos has prepared a symposium filled with witty and wise speakers. There'll be lots of door prizes, time for special announcements and camellia camaraderie for all—

PLUS a delicious buffet luncheon.

Champagne Time at 6:30 p.m. (Rooms 221-223) with those wonderful creative and often zany costumes. Then on to the banquet room for THE COSTUME PARADE with awards, the Traditional Prime Rib Dinner, dancing to the music of Johnny Salatino, the Super Raffle and the Awesome "Winners-need-not-be-present-to-win" Drawing.

The theme is "ANIMALS"—or anything or anyone associated with an animal, e.g., a bullfrog, elephant, "Golden Calf," "Roadrunner," "Puddy-Tat," bird cage, aquarium, butterfly bush, bee hive, dog collar, veterinarian, jockey, snake charmer, zoo docent, safari hunter, shepherd, drover.

Sunday morning the "Farewell Breakfast" (banquet room) with talk of the fun we had, great camellias and upcoming shows.

Come help us open the '95-'96 camellia season.

Registration		\$ 6.00 each
Saturday	Buffet Luncheon	12.00 each
	Prime Rib Dinner	28.00 each
Sunday	Breakfast	8.00 each
Entire package		\$54.00 each

Send check payable to CALIFORNIA CAMELLIA-RAMA to Chris Gonos, 5643 N. College, Fresno, CA 93704.

Motel reservations at Sheraton Smuggler's Inn (\$67 per night—Single or Double) must be made through Chris. (209)439-2228.

'EMMA GAETA', AN A.C.S. FAVORITE

'Emma Gaeta', hybridized by Meyer Piet, received the 1993 Charlotte C. Knox Award for best *Camellia reticulata*. (see "Charlotte C. Knox Reticulata," ACS National Camellia

Awards, 1994 *American Camellia Society Yearbook*, p. xii). This is a great recognition from the American Camellia Society for a truly outstanding bloom. **CONGRATULATIONS**, Meyer.

S.C.C.S. AWARDS DINNER

Chuck Gerlach

At the Los Angeles County Arboretum on April 27, 1995, was undoubtedly one of the most enjoyable potluck dinners this writer has attended in the twenty-one years I have been in the Camellia World. Upon arrival, guests were greeted by two tables full of goodies. You name it—wine, a punch bowl, nuts, pretzels, dips and chips. Dorothy Christinson, who was in charge of the potluck, did an outstanding job of organizing this affair. Some seventy-five or more people enjoyed an assortment of twenty-five main dishes, fifteen salads and numerous desserts. There was enough food to feed "General Patton's Third Army."

Following dinner, President Marilee Gray called the group together for the awards. The Frank L. Storment Award for an outstanding reticulata was presented to Nuccio's Nurseries for their 1989 introduction of 'Bill Woodroof', named after a gentleman known throughout the camellia world. The monthly cut flower display winners were as follows:

First place—Marilee Gray; Runner-up—Bob and Alice Jaacks. The Colonel Reid trophy for most "gib" points was also won by the Jaacks. Sergio Bracci announced the William E. Woodroof Camellia Hall of Fame Awards for 1995 as follows: 'Nuccio's Pearl' and 'Nicky Crisp' (N.Z. 1989, Durrant).

A new award, "Mr. Nice Guy," was given to Julius "Chris" Christinson for all his efforts in all societies. Marilee Gray presented a much deserved award to Bobbie Belcher for all her untiring work. The award was a candle holder made by Grady Perigan

from very hard camellia wood turned on his lathe.

The main event of the evening was a slide show, thanks to Elsie Bracci. Elsie had been corresponding with Vonnie Cave, the noted New Zealand photographer, and was aware that she was planning a trip to California with a companion, Elva Harwood. Vonnie was invited to show slides of New Zealand and its many beautiful blooms. Vonnie included views of her home and extensive gardens, some of which she had taken from a helicopter. Grady Perigan furnished a tripod and projector as well as the carousels for her slides.

As a souvenir of her trip to California, Grady presented Vonnie one of his camellia wood candle holders.

Among the guests enjoying the evening were Julius, Bonnie and Tom Nuccio.

A plant raffle, which included gift certificates from Nuccio's Nurseries, concluded a most enjoyable evening.



*Vonnie Cave and Elva Harwood from
New Zealand*



*Above: Lynn and Brad King, Mel Belcher
Below: Berkeley and Myra Pace, Jim and Dorothy McQuiston*



*Left: Bob and Alice Jaacks, Elsie Bracci
Below left: Russ Monroe
Below: Julius, Bonnie and Tom Nuccio*



CAMELLIA RESEARCH ON PH

Gordon H. Goff

Member of Northern California Camellia Society Research Committee

Research on pH as related to camellia culture has been of general interest to me for years. I have recognized its importance and am aware of a few misconceptions about pH which deserve investigative research. This topic moved up to the top of my research priorities after reading the report by Dr. Daniel Nathan in the 1993 ACS Yearbook entitled "A Primary pH Greenhouse Calamity." Briefly, Dr. Nathan sought expert advice on growing his camellias under optimum pH conditions. He started out at pH of 6.5 and was advised by a county agent that, according to literature references, he should change to 5.0 to 5.5 by the addition of soil sulfur. During this process there was a mishap in which too much sulfur was added and resulted in the loss of 365 plants. These plants died over a period of many months during which they looked sick and showed a loss of roots. At first root rot fungus was suspected, but tests showed no fungus. The lab didn't have a clue as to the trouble and reported "physiological problems." Dr. Nathan did extensive work to determine that it was overacidity that caused the death of his plants and has done a service to us by providing a full report and a warning. Over a period of years I have had plants that mysteriously died. I assumed at the time that it was root rot, but it seemed strange that other plants in the same soil mix and watered in the same manner would flourish. I now believe that most of my plant problems were due to low pH. I noted, particularly, that many of the plants that I lost were non-retic hybrids. Subsequent review of the literature indicates that japonicas are most tolerant and saluenensis hybrids are least tolerant of low pH. In order to help prevent future "pH calamities," I thought I should find out more about pH with some research.

Concept of pH

First a brief review of the concept of

pH, which you may remember from your chemistry. pH represents a scale for measuring the acidity or alkalinity of a solution. A scale from 0 to 14 is used in which 7 is neutral, below 7 is acidic and above 7 is basic (alkaline). The pH scale represents the negative logarithm of the hydrogen ion concentration. The importance of this is that on a logarithmic scale each value is a factor of ten different than the next number. For example, a pH of 5 is ten times as acidic as a pH of 6. Some reference points are water = 7.0, lemon juice = 2.5, orange juice = 4.6, baking soda = 8.5, and milk of magnesia = 9.0. Note that pH refers to a solution which means that a soil pH must measure the liquid phase of the soil. All of the fundamental processes of life are chemical in nature and depend on maintaining the proper pH. For example, in both human and animal bodies the pH of the blood and body fluid is maintained in the narrow range of 7.35-7.45. Death occurs in man when blood pH falls to 6.8 or rises to 7.6. Plants are more tolerant to pH variation, but they also have their limits which, when exceeded, will cause death. The health of plants is greatly affected by pH because it affects their nutrition since all of their food must come from solutions absorbed by their roots. This is discussed in the next section.

Effect of pH on plant nutrition

My review of the literature indicates that this subject is complex when you consider all 16 nutrients required for camellia growth and the chemical interactions between them as a function of pH. Two articles on this subject (1,2) indicate that the best availability of these various food elements is between a pH of 5.5 and 7.0 with an optimum at pH of 6.3. Toxic conditions, including dieback, are caused by an excess of minerals, such as manganese or aluminum. This situation is possible at low pH whenever mineralized particles

of soil have been added to your soil mix. Plants will be more tolerant of low pH in a mostly organic soil because fewer of the potentially harmful minerals are present. One further effect of pH is that soil bacteria thrive best at a pH of 6.0 to 7.3. The bacteria are vital to the release of nutrients and growth of roots. Low pH encourages harmful fungi population and plant disease.

Measurement of pH

One of my first research objectives was to determine how to measure pH reliably and practically. Initially pH test paper and pH color tests, as supplied with soil test kits, were tried and abandoned as not being precise enough because of too wide range and because of color interference by dissolved soil. The next measurement category tried was a pH meter which uses conductivity probes inserted in the soil. Many variations of these are commonly sold, but I have always wondered just how good they were because they are scientifically incorrect for good pH measurement and do not permit calibration. I purchased four different meters of this type varying in cost from \$5 to \$95. These meters did not agree and gave inconsistent readings among themselves. I had presumed that this would be the situation from previous experience so, at the start of the research project, I invested in a professional quality digital pH meter from LaMotte Co., as used by soil laboratories, so that I would have a valid standard of comparison. This meter is excellent, but it obviously is not the answer for the average camellia grower. I investigated that economic problem by purchasing another inexpensive meter which also has a hydrogen electrode with digital readout. My check shows that its pH readings are accurate, and it can be calibrated. This is a simplified basic meter designed for home use, called Checker, purchased for about \$50 from Gardener's Supply Co. My practical recommendation for the average person is to buy a conductivity type pH meter and follow the manufacturer's recommendations carefully. For

satisfactory readings the soil must be quite moist and the metal probes kept clean and polished. The conductivity meter is the more convenient type because it can be used right at the plant rather than having to take a representative soil sample to a lab, mix with distilled water and then analyze. In addition to a conductivity meter, you should have access to a Checker (or similar) true pH meter to use for calibration. Although the conductivity meter reading cannot be adjusted, calibration permits you to estimate its offset from the actual pH value. My tests showed that this difference can be as much as 1-2 pH units on the high side, which can be quite a serious error.

Measurement of pH is not a simple matter because the result can only reflect the particular sample taken. Soil surrounding a plant generally will not have a uniform pH and can change with both circumference and depth. For example, a test on one of my healthy plants showed an average pH of 4.4 at the plant surface but a pH of 6.0-6.5 down at the main roots. This often happens when fertilizing with acid fertilizers. A check of a friend's dead plant showed a pH of 4.4 at the root system; a buildup of acidity from the surface to the roots over time had occurred until the fatal limit was reached. This could have been prevented by observing signs of a sick plant, by checking pH and by adding dolomitic lime (dolomite) to the plant to increase the pH.

pH of soil mixes and components

Table I shows pH values of some commonly used ingredients for soil mixes and fertilizers.

One of the research objectives was to check the pH effect of Ironite, which is an inexpensive form of iron sulfate and also contains other desirable minerals. Many of our local growers have substituted this material for chelated iron which is difficult to obtain and quite expensive. For most local people the standard fertilizer used was 4 parts cottonseed meal and 1 part Ironite. My testing showed that Ironite had

Table I

**pH of SOIL MIX COMPONENTS/
FERTILIZERS**

Ground Bark	4.0-8.0
Super Phosphate	4.6
Compost	4.0-8.0
Ironite	2.5
Leaf Mold	4.0-7.0
Ammonium Sulfate	5.7
Peat Moss	3.2-4.5
RAC Fertilizer (KGRO 4-8-10)	6.4
Sand/Perlite	7.0 (Inert)
Dolomite/ Limestone	8.0-8.3
Cottonseed Meal	4.5-6.2
Bonemeal	8.2

It should be recognized that all organic material will decompose with time and become more acidic. For example, in Table 1 it can be seen that leaf mold changes from pH 7 to pH 4 as it ages. Peat moss can get as low as pH 3.2 as it ages which means that the quantity of peat moss in a soil mix must be limited and countered with higher pH material.

pH adjustment

For many years local camellia growers have been concerned that our water supply has a pH of 8.5-9.0, which is done intentionally to reduce corrosion of pipes. People thought that they had to counterbalance this water alkalinity by doing such things as adding phosphoric acid to their irrigation water or using acidifying agents such as soil sulfur or alum. My experience would indicate that acidification is generally unnecessary if the soil mix is primarily organic. In fact, the water alkalinity may conveniently counterbalance the natural

Table II **pH OF CAMELLIA COMMERCIAL SOIL MIXES**

Nuccio's Nurseries	5.5 (from purchased plants)
Hines Nursery	5.0 (from purchased plants)
American Soil Products (Rhody Blend)	6.4 (bulk)
Highland Rock City (Forest Humus)	7.1 (bulk)

dangerously low acidity, and a warning was issued to local camellia growers to use it with caution. Recently we learned that some of our finest camellia growers in Sacramento had lost many plants and suffered personal stress because of their use of Ironite. This occurred more than a year after our research results but unfortunately the word had not reached them.

Included in the research effort were pH analyses of soil mixes used by members of my own N.C.C.S. and by members of the Santa Clara Camellia Society. However, it is of more general interest to present in Table II only the pH data on soil mixes used or sold commercially.

acidity of the organic material and of the fertilizers. I find from my tests that I have to keep adding dolomite to maintain my pH in the desired range of 6-7. The use of dolomite is preferred over the use of agricultural lime (limestone) because dolomite contains magnesium as well as calcium. Dolomite is only slightly soluble so it has residual action, but this also means that no fast action can be expected. According to the literature, it takes about 5 pounds of dolomite per cubic yard of organic type soil to change the pH by one unit. So far, I have adjusted pH by trial and error by using my pH meter over an extended period. I would not advise a quick adjustment using

hydrated lime with a pH of 12. If you should need to acidify, then I would consider using Ironite as part of your fertilizer program, but use caution.

Summary

The health of a camellia plant is related to the pH of its soil because of nutrient availability and because of toxicity at low pH. Over a short term the pH probably can vary over a wide range and the plant will survive, but the long range goal should be to maintain a pH of 6-7. The plant itself will show if it is unhealthy and be an indicator that the

pH is out of the desired range. Methods of measuring pH are discussed. Adjustment of pH is a continuing activity which should be done with knowledge and caution. Attention to proper control of the pH of your plants is a necessary part of camellia culture and can reward you with healthy plants and beautiful flowers.

References

1. R. A. Merritt, 1951 ACS Yearbook, page 141
2. E. C. Snooks, 1983 ACS Yearbook, page 19

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MODESTO CAMELLIA SOCIETY

34TH ANNUAL SHOW, March 18 and 19, 1995

Best of Show	'Bobbie Fain Variegated'	Edith Mazzei
Sweepstakes		Bob Ehrhart
Runner-up Sweepstakes		Don & Mary Bergamini
Award of Excellence		Bob Ehrhart
Japonica - Very Large		
Best Single	'Dusty'	Larry & Nancy Pitts
Runner-up Single	'Tomorrow Park Hill'	Larry & Nancy Pitts
Best Tray of 3	'Royal Velvet'	Larry & Nancy Pitts
Best Tray of 5	'Royal Velvet'	Eric Hansen
Japonica - Large		
Best Single	'Bobbie Fain Variegated'	Edith Mazzei
Runner-up Single	'Helen Bower'	Larry & Nancy Pitts
Best Tray of 3	'Lady Laura'	Tom & Marge Lee
Japonica - Medium		
Best Single	'Veiled Beauty'	Peggy Phillips
Best Tray of 3	'Spring Fling'	Harlan & Judy Smith
Best Tray of 5	'Nuccio's Pearl'	Bob Ehrhart
Small and Miniature Blooms		
Best Single Small	'Black Tie'	Larry & Nancy Pitts
Runner-up Single Small	'Ausha Carter'	Larry & Nancy Pitts
Best Tray of 3 Small	'Kramer's Fluted Coral'	Harlan & Judy Smith
Best Tray of 5 Small	'Hara-No-Utena'	Hal & Deane Burch
Best Single Miniature	'Lemon Drop'	Betty Breuner
Runner-up Single Miniature	'Spring Festival'	Jack & Anne Woo
Best Tray of 3 Miniatures	'Grace Albritton'	Don & Sue Kendall
Best Tray of 5 Miniatures	'Spring Festival'	Art & Chris Gonos
Reticulata or Reticulata Hybrid		
Best Single Large/Very Large	'John Hunt'	Don & Joan Lesmeister
Runner-up Single Large/Very Large	'S. P. Dunn'	Edith Mazzei
Best Single Medium	'Dr. Louis Polizzi'	Art & Chris Gonos
Runner-up Single Medium	'Miss Tulare Variegated'	Jack & Anne Woo
Best Tray of 3	'Royalty'	Jim & Jackie Randall
Non-Reticulata Hybrid		
Best Single	'First Blush'	Don & Dolores Martin
Runner-up Single	'Kramer's Fluted Coral'	Don & Joan Lesmeister
Best Tray of 3	'Kramer's Fluted Coral'	Art & Chris Gonos
Best Seedling, Medium/Very Large	2190 Seedling	Edith Mazzei
Best Seedling, Miniature/Small		Jake & Eleanor Holtzman
Best Japonica—Youth	'Eleanor Martin Supreme'	Kristina Hardman
Best Retic or Hybrid		
Non-Retic—Youth	'Black Lace'	Melissa Rayl
Best Miniature—Youth	'Grace Albritton'	Autumn Kendall
Best Fragrant Bloom		Bob Ehrhart
Best Higo Bloom	'Kumagai'	Hal & Deane Burch
Best Yellow Bloom	'Dahlongai'	Edith Mazzei

Best White Bloom from Head

Table Flowers	'Nuccio's Gem'	Don & Joan Lesmeister
Best Collection of 9 Different Blooms		Art & Chris Gonos
Best Collection of 9 Different Boutonnieres		Bob Ehrhart
Best Collection of 3 Different Blooms		Don & Joan Lesmeister
Best Japonica—Modesto Member	'Lady Laura'	Harlan & Judy Smith
Runner-up—Modesto member	'Royal Velvet'	Darren & Julie Smith
Best Retic or Non-Retic—		
Modesto Member	'Julie Variegated'	Ron Hardman
Runner-up—Modesto Member	'Royalty'	Tony & Natalie Miranda

Arrangements—Most Outstanding

Best of Show	Harlan Smith
Open Division	Nancy Bates
Society Member (Class 1)	Harlan Smith
Society Member (Class 20)	Jane Dorn
By a Woman Member	Nancy Bates
Novice Division	Betty Weatherly
Intermediate Division	Heather Clayton
Advanced Division	Hazel Nyquist
Men's Division	Harlan Smith
Table Setting	Gaby Stoutamire
Miniature—under 5"	Gaby Stoutamire
Miniature—6-8"	Gaby Stoutamire
Junior—Ages 7-10	Derek Weatherly
Junior—Ages 11-14	Lory Doroy
Floor Arrangement	Esther Gnesa

CONTRIBUTIONS • THANK YOU!

In Memory of Kathrene Lee Jue,

Sister and Sister-in-Law of Arlene and Leland Chow
from their friends in the Camellia Society of Kern County:
Glenn Burroughs, Mel & Polly Canfield, Doris Dermody, Fred & Beverly
Dukes, Charlotte Johnson, Helen Maas, George Priest,
Roger & Lavenia Treischel, Gena Uhalt

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In Memory of Stanley Miller

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In Memory of Sydney Goldhammer

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In Honor Charlotte Johnson

from her friends in the Camellia Society of Kern County:
Glenn Burroughs, Arlene & Leland Chow, Doris Dermody,
Helen Maas, Gena Uhalt

*Please send contributions for
The Camellia Nomenclature Fund and The Camellia Review Fund to:
Southern California Camellia Society,
7475 Brydon Road, La Verne, CA 91750-1159*

PARK HILL REVISITED

Mary Kay Mittag

The Southern California Camellia Society enjoyed a scenic luncheon and guided tour on Saturday, May 6th, at Park Hill Estate. The original owner, Ralph Peer I, "The Camellia Ambassador to the World," was instrumental in establishing camellia societies in the Southern California area decades ago. (See Jim Emmons'

Camellia Society and asked for help with identification of some of the camellias. Later, he invited the group to visit Park Hill. (Jim was even able to order perfect weather for the occasion even though it had rained hard just before and just after the event.) The Society has been invited to return and, if you haven't treated



The original plant of the variety 'California'.

article about "Tomorrow Park Hill", Vol. 56, No. 4.) Park Hill Estate consists of eight acres on a terraced hillside in Laurel Canyon. Many of the terrace walls were made from "recycled" pieces of concrete brought to the estate by the former gardener in his pickup truck—one load at a time.

Under the current direction of Jim Emmons and Ralph Peer II, this wonderful collection of more than 300 camellias, established in the late 40's and 50's, is being restored. Jim contacted the Southern California

yourself to Park Hill, you won't want to miss the next visit.

In 1959 a 75-year old camellia plant Japonica 'California' was purchased by Ralph Peer I. Its flowers are rose pink and range from single to loose semidouble. This was the beginning of an engineering and horticultural feat which has been referred to as one of the major movings of a camellia transplant in the world. The plant was to be moved 30 miles from Pico, California, to Park Hill. At the time it was 30 feet high, about 30

feet wide and had a trunk that was 15 inches in diameter. Its total weight, including the supports and box, was 15 tons. Getting the plant placed on the steep hillside was a major problem because the ground area surrounding the chosen planting site was already thickly planted and inaccessible to heavy vehicles. The solution was to haul the 15 ton load to the street overlooking the garden and lower it down the 200 foot embankment using

cables, winches, rollers and railroad tracks.

A number of years ago the plant became diseased and the growth on the original trunk died. Since then, Japonica 'California' has regenerated itself from some existing roots and now has several trunks rather than one. Mel Belcher did some pruning on the plant, and we're all looking forward to a return visit to check on its progress.



I'VE BEEN THINKING . . .

Scottie Illes:

I was angry with everyone and everything. Things were not going right. Nothing specific—I was just at “sixes and sevens” with the whole world. I knew that, if I had been in charge, things would have been much better.

With this snarling, superior attitude I went to check on our garden. Of course, there was a camellia that needed to be potted up. I had noticed it before but kept putting it off. I grudgingly gathered the necessary items and started in. Before I was through, I surprised myself—I was talking to the plant and assuring it that it would be happier and healthier in its new home and that its friends would love its new clothes. I then realized that my world had righted itself and I was again sunshiny inside.

•••

Wouldn't it be wonderful if everyone who had a touch of anger, unhappiness, disappointment or sadness could have a garden (even a small plant) and get his or her hands dirty potting up, planting in or just aerating the soil. How can anyone stay down when he is helping green up and make beautiful this asphalt, cement and building-covered corner of the world?

•••

You know you have an obsessive hobby when choices are made for you subconsciously. I was in a lovely antique shop where I was torn between a gracefully fluted green glass pitcher and a cameo that could have belonged to my grandmother. On my last quick look around, before I made my choice, I saw a plain, nondescript cranberry glass bowl that was simply waiting to hold a 'Nuccio's Gem'.

•••

Have you ever really looked at the new growth in your camellia garden with the many shades of green—'Margaret Hilford' chased with lime-yellow, the reddish flush of 'Night Rider' and 'Royal Velvet', the icy green of 'Nuccio's Gem' and others? Have you watched the gradual darkening of each new leaf as it gains strength and hardens or the change from “nail polish shiny” to the unimpressive dullness of the reticulata, the plant that will give spectacular blooms? GREEN—the definition of “HOPE” for all gardeners!

•••

I'm playing a waiting game. I have a graft that lost its scion leaf before the new growth bud developed very far. The same thing happened last year, but the plant continued to take form. Will the loss of the scion leaf affect the growth pattern of the plant? Will there be blooms? I feel like a second floor walk-up detective—enthusiastic, without many clues, and hoping for impressive solutions.

SOME REAL UNSUNG BEAUTIES

Bill Donnan

Nuccio's Nurseries is one of the last camellia nurseries on the West coast which takes the time and effort to develop or import new camellia varieties. Each year they attempt to introduce four or five of their own discovered and developed varieties and to propagate and introduce several outstanding imports. At the same time they try to have several of their new introductions published in color on the cover of *The Camellia Review*. Thus, if you are a member of the Southern California Camellia Society, you can become familiar with the color and beauty of these new introductions. In this article I want to acquaint you with those newer camellias which have been introduced but which you may not have seen unless you have visited the nursery at the time they were in bloom. Some of these varieties are truly outstanding, and they merit your critical consideration as additions to your collections.

In the fall of 1991, Nuccio's Nurseries introduced 'Joe Nuccio', 'Merry Christmas', 'Jewel Box', 'Candy Apple', 'Matilija Poppy', and 'Double Rainbow'. You have all seen 'Joe Nuccio' and 'Merry Christmas' in color on the cover of *The Camellia Review* and they are outstanding new camellias. But, if you have not seen 'Jewel Box', you are missing something which will catch and hold your eye when it is in bloom. This is a true dwarf *Camellia sasanqua* that is ideal for a potted plant on one's patio. The plant has bushy, very small dark green foliage, and the tiny blooms, single whites edged with light pink shine forth like jewels amid the dark green leaves.

Another outstanding introduction of 1991 was 'Matilija Poppy'. This is a large to very large white semi-double with crinkled petals and a large burst of stamens. It looks like the famous California poppy of the

same name.

A third new '91 variety which has considerable merit is 'Candy Apple'. This camellia is a dark to brownish red color. It is a medium to large semi-double to loose peony form with yellow stamens. It has bushy upright growth and could be a good garden variety. The color of the bloom is exactly like a candy apple.

In the fall of 1992 the nursery introduced 'Happy Higo', 'Red Hots', 'Black Magic', 'Baby Doll' and 'Spring Daze'. You readers may recall that the first two of these graced the covers of *The Camellia Review* that year. However, the most outstanding cultivar of that year, in my opinion, was 'Black Magic'. The color of this variety is so striking that it has been difficult to obtain a good color slide of it due to the bright, bright sheen of the petals. 'Black Magic' is a very, very dark red—a real color break. It is a medium, irregular semi-double to rose form double with thick shiny petals. The foliage is dark green with holly-like leaves. This camellia deserves a place in everyone's collection. In fact, I have placed it on my "Best Ten" list.

'Spring Daze', a Kramer Brothers Nursery introduction, is a *Camellia saluenensis* hybrid which was introduced that year. It is a blush pink edged in coral pink, formal to rose form double, small to medium size. The plant has a bushy, upright growth. If you are a "formal double freak" as I am, you will need this plant.

Another introduction of 1992 was 'Baby Doll'. This is a miniature cultivar and, since I am not "taken" with miniatures, I have not seen much of it. Thus, I cannot give you an honest critique of its merits.

In the fall of 1993 the nursery introduced quite a few new varieties, and the six 'Tama-No-Ura' cross seedlings were on the cover of *The*

Camellia Review. A color photo of 'K. Ohara' was also used on one of the covers, so I will not describe these cultivars.

There were two imports from Japan propagated and introduced that year which deserve further critical consideration by camellia hobbyists. The first of these is 'Surisumi'. This is a white with heavy textured petals and beautiful stamens. The plant has vigorous, upright growth.

The second Japanese import is 'Satsuma'. This is a medium to large

white formal double with incurved petals. It is so outstanding that, in my considered opinion, it actually rivals 'Nuccio's Gem'. Over the years as I have watched this cultivar being propagated, my eyes have been filled with joy at the sight of it in bloom. (Here is old formal double freak Donnan talking!)

There you have it. There is my critique of the recent past introductions. I hope you will take a look for yourself to see how right or wrong Bill Donnan was!

INTRODUCTIONS FOR 1995-96

'ACS Jubilee'	'Lucky Star'	'Silverado'
'Snowfall'	'Yume'	<i>Camellia lapedea</i>
'Hakushu'	'Himekoki'	'Kamo-Honnami'
'Nishiki Kirin'	'Okumi'	'Oshima Pink'
'Oshima Red'	Oshima White'	'Tsushima-No-Musume'
'Satsuma Kurenai'	'Wakamurasaki'	

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APOLOGIES TO THE GERLACHS AND THE GONOSSES

It was brought to our attention that the show results from the Pomona Valley Camellia Show as printed in Vol. 56, No. 4, p. 21, were incomplete. Here are the omitted winners—and our apology:

Reticulata or Reticulata Hybrid - Small or Medium

Best Single	'Betty Ridley'	Art & Chris Gonos
Runner-up Single	'Dr. Louis Polizzi'	Chuck & Rosamond Gerlach

YOU COULD WIN THIS BEAUTIFUL PAINTING

The estate of Dean Altizer has generously donated a beautiful oil painting of 'Eleanor Martin Supreme' to the Southern California Camellia Society. This painting was done on stretched canvas by Ann Hackney of

receive this Review by mail have already noticed that three tickets were included with your Review. If you want to participate in this raffle, print your name and address on each ticket and return them with your



Charlotte, North Carolina, in 1981. The size, including the frame, is 27 x 23. Raffle tickets for this painting are being sold 3 for \$10.00, and the drawing will be held at the Southern California Camellia Society Awards Dinner in April, 1996. The winner need not be present to win this beautiful painting. Those of you who

check payable to S.C.C.S. to Alma Wood, 2434 Allanjay Place, Glendale, CA 91208. Write "Raffle Tickets" in the memo space on your check. Alma will have additional tickets in the event you want them.

Our sincere thanks to Suzie Altizer for her gracious gift.

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CENTRAL CALIFORNIA CAMELLIA SOCIETY: President—Mary Anne Ray; Secretary—Christine Gonos, 5643 North College Avenue, Fresno 93704. Meetings: 3rd Wednesday, November-February, 7:30 p.m. Sheraton Smuggler's Inn, 3737 N. Blackstone, Fresno.

DELTA CAMELLIA SOCIETY: President—Larry Pitts; Secretary—Evelyn Kilsby, 11 Tiffin Court, Clayton 94517. Meetings: 2nd Tuesday, November-March, 7:30 p.m., City of Pittsburg Environmental Center, 2581 Harbor St., Pittsburg.

KERN COUNTY, CAMELLIA SOCIETY OF: President—Helen Maas; Secretary—Susan Coyle, 7401-24 Hilton Head Way, Bakersfield 93309. For meeting dates and times, call Helen Maas (805)872-2188.

MODESTO, CAMELLIA SOCIETY OF: President—Don Kendall; Secretary—Sue Kendall, 1505 Gary Lane, Modesto, 95355. Meetings: 2nd Tuesday September-May, 7:00 p.m., Memorial Hospital Education Dept., Room 62, 1800 Coffee Road, Modesto.

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA CAMELLIA SOCIETY: President—Larry Pitts; Secretary—Eric Hansen. Meetings: 1st Monday, November-April, 7:30 p.m., Oak Grove School, 2050 Minert Road, Concord. Final meeting in May is a dinner meeting.

PACIFIC CAMELLIA SOCIETY: President—Russ Monroe; Secretary—Alma Wood, 2434 Allanjay Place, Glendale 91208. Meetings: 1st Thursday, November-March, 7:30 p.m., Descanso Gardens, 1418 Descanso Drive, La Canada.

PENINSULA CAMELLIA SOCIETY: President—Ed Tooker; Secretary—Nicky Farmer, 360 Santa Margarita Avenue, Menlo Park 94025. Meetings: 4th Tuesday, October-March, Veterans' Building, 1455 Madison Avenue, Redwood City.

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SACRAMENTO, CAMELLIA SOCIETY OF: President—Bob Conlin; Secretary—Mary Louise Jones, 4454 Marley Drive, Sacramento 95521. Meetings: 4th Wednesday, October-April, 7:30 p.m., Garden and Arts Center, 3330 McKinley Boulevard, Sacramento.

SAN DIEGO CAMELLIA SOCIETY: President—Dean Turney; Secretary—Catherine Marlar, 4734 Cather Circle, San Diego 92122. Meetings: 3rd Wednesday, November-April, 7:30 p.m., Room 101 Casa del Prado, Balboa Park, San Diego.

SANTA CLARA COUNTY, INC., CAMELLIA SOCIETY OF: President—Bev Allman; Secretary-Treasurer—Helen Augis, 2254 Fairvalley Court, San Jose, CA 95125. Meetings: 3rd Wednesday, October-April, 7:00 p.m., Lick Mill Park, 4750 Lick Mill Boulevard, Santa Clara.

SOUTH COAST CAMELLIA SOCIETY: President—Helen Gates; Secretary—Pauline Jones, 1251 Tenth Street, San Pedro 90731. Meetings: 3rd Tuesday, September-July, 7:30 p.m., South Coast Botanic Garden, 26300 Crenshaw Boulevard, Palos Verdes Peninsula.

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