

The

Camellia REVIEW

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Southern California Camellia Society

An organization devoted to the advancement of the camellia for the benefit of
mankind — physically, mentally and inspirationally.

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THE CAMELLIA REVIEW

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Cover Photo

C. grijsii.

White, sometimes fragrant; leaves elliptic and sharply pointed, edges sharply serrulate.

A shrub up to 9'. Eastern China

Photo by Gene Phillips

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THOUGHTS FROM THE EDITOR

Can it be that the “2014-2015 camellia season” has begun in California and camellia societies are beginning their monthly meetings. The sight of the camellia plants putting forth those little green buds that delight us with blooms in such a few short months reminds us that camellia shows are just over the horizon.

This is the first of three Reviews for this season. You may have read my pleas last season for someone to replace me as Editor, but no one has come forth. So, here I am again. The offer/plea is still open.

In his first year as Editor of the Review 20+ years ago, Mel Belcher listed a number of suggestions for articles that could be helpful for other camellia hobbyists. You will find some of those suggestions on page 24. How about putting pen to paper (or fingers to computer) and share some of your experiences. Share pictures of your garden, ideas you’ve had for shade, fertilizing, watering, etc., etc.

Brad King tells us why camellias are popular in some areas and not in others. When you read Gene Phillips’ article and check out his online offerings, you will see photos of the gorgeous blooms his nursery offers. But, as Brad mentions, we don’t see those blooms in our Southern California shows. Sad . . .

Marvin Belcher and Joe and Linda Tunner share thoughts about ‘Astronaut’ and we are reminded that sometimes certain varieties just “disappear” if we are not careful.

In his article about talking with the Nuccios, Brad reminds us how this favorite nursery of California camellia hobbyists began in a backyard and has continued for 75 years. Gene Phillips tells how Gene’s Nursery in Savannah, Georgia also began in a back yard and is still alive and well 60 years later.

A couple of articles from the Archives and there you have it until next time.

Camellia season is when we see friends that we don’t see very often during the rest of the year. Enjoy the friends and this great hobby!

Bobbie Belcher, Editor



Southern California Camellia Society “Market”

Copies of the 2014 Camellia Nomenclature are still available. The price is \$20 per issue including postage and tax within the United States. Buy 5 or more copies and get a 20% discount.

Copies of ‘Sun Camellias Beautiful Evergreen Landscape Plants for the Garden’ are available for \$10 plus \$2.50 postage.

Camellia note cards in packets of 8 for \$8.00 are also available.

Purchases can be made online at socialcamelliasociety.org or by sending a check payable to Southern California Camellia Society (SCCS) to 2531 2nd Street, La Verne, CA 91750. For purchases to be sent outside of the United States, please inquire about the price. Membership dues can also be paid online.

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Camellia Show Schedule 2015

January 10	Southern California Camellia Council Judges Symposium 9:00 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.	Descanso
January 17 and 18	Pacific Camellia Society Show Chair: Tom Gilfoy Judges Chair: George Harrison Bloom Placemen: 7:00 - 10:30 a.m.	Descanso
January 24 amd 25	Southern California Camellia Society Show Chair: Brad King Judges Chair Beth Stone Bloom Placement: 7 - 10:30 a.m.	Descanso
February 7 and 8	San Diego Camellia Society Show Chair Gene Snooks Judges Chair: Dean Turney Bloom Placement: 8:00 to 10:00 a.m.	Casa Del Prado Balboa Park
February 14 and 15	Southern California Camellia Society Show Chair: Brad King Judges Chair: Beth Stone Bloom Placement: 7:00 - 10:30 a.m.	Huntington
February 21 and 22	Pomona Valley Camellia Society Show Chair: Carol Stickley Judges Chair: Lindsey Brewer Bloom placement: 6:00 - 10:30 a.m.	Community Center La Verne
February 22	Mini Show Bloom placement: noon - 2:00 p.m.	
February 28 and March 1	Southern California Council Show Chair: Wayne Walker Judges Chair: George Harrison Bloom placement: 7:00 - 10:30 a.m.	Descanso
March 7 and 8	Camellia Society of Kern County Show Chair: Libby Stull Judges' Chair: Susan Stull Design and bloom placement: 6:00 - 10:30 a.m.	Racquet Club 1660 Pine Street Bakersfield
March 14 and 15	Pacific Camellia Society "Late Bloomers" Show Show Chair: Wayne Walker Judges Chair: George Harrison Design and bloom placement: 8:00 - 10:30 a.m.	Descanso

CAMELLIA POPULARITY

Bradford King

Why is it that some camellia cultivars are widely accepted and sought after in one part of America and rarely seen in another? There are many highly desirable and admired camellias grown in the Southeastern states that we hardly ever see in Southern California. A great example is 'Cile Mitchell', a large light orchid pink rose form to formal double flower. It was introduced in 1992 by Hulyn Smith, a prolific hybridizer from Georgia. This nonreticulata hybrid is a top winning camellia show flower in the Southeastern States but has not been seen at the camellia shows in Southern California. It won 49 points in 2013 shows but no wins in California. Is it grown by anyone in California? I don't know, but I have never seen it here. It competes favorably with the more widely grown camellias like 'Buttons 'N Bows' and 'Spring Daze' that each win in the South and in California. Why is this?



'Cile Mitchell'

Dr. Walter Homeyer from Macon, Georgia introduced 'Frank Houser' in 1989. It and its variegated form have become the most popular reticulatas in America and the biggest winners in camellia shows throughout all the U.S. in the last fifteen years. While Dr. Homeyer's introduction 'Betty Ridley'

wins show points in the Southeast, it is not seen in Southern California shows. Why is this? This lovely medium to large pink formal double flower was introduced in 1973 by Dr. Homeyer who used 'Felice Harris' as the pollen parent. Howard Asper introduced 'Felice Harris', a large semidouble pale orchid pink flower with fluted petals, as a reticulata hybrid in 1976. The mother, according to the International Camellia Registry, was imported to America in 1930 by Star Nursery, Montebello, California as 'Narumigata'. The pollen parent was listed by Asper as a reticulata hybrid of 'Buddha'. The original ACS registration form shows he had a question mark after the listing because the plant label had been lost. Subsequent investigation has revealed the pollen parent was an unknown *C. japonica* and not 'Buddha'. This cultivar looks and grows like a japonica as a result of its paternal inheritance. This required the



'Betty Ridley'

nomenclature research committee to move 'Felice Harris' into the non-reticulata section of the *Camellia Nomenclature 2014*; consequently, its children 'Betty Ridley', 'Betty Ridley Variegated' and 'Virginia Wormack' were also moved to the non-reticulata section. 'Betty Ridley' and 'Betty Ridley Variegated' are

propagated by Nuccio's Nurseries who confirm the plant and flower grow like a japonica. Now that 'Betty Ridley' is available in California, perhaps it will win in local camellia shows.

In addition, Dr. Homeyer introduced 'Edna Bass' in 1992. This very large red semidouble to peony form flower wins its share of show points. However, none of these points come from camellia shows in Southern California. In fact, I have no recollection of seeing it in any recent local show. In Don Bergamini's 2013 article "Judges have Spoken!" the best show blooms in the very large japonica class were 'Edna Bass' with 36 points; 'Edna Bass Variegated' had 27 'Paul Haskee' had 35 and

mellia shows in 2013 and 2014 held in Southern California we didn't even have entries of these top four winners. Why is this?

A number of camellia shows in the Southeast have a "Best White Class." The usual winners are 'Melissa Ann', a large to very large loose peony to peony form, and the medium formal double 'Sea Foam'. They also win regularly in the japonica classes. 'Melissa Ann' garnered 38 points as a very large and 'Sea Foam' 53 in the medium class. We have no "Best White Class" in Southern California camellia shows, but we also don't see either of these cultivars in their respective japonica classes. Why is this?

'Tiny Princess', the miniature white



'Edna Bass Variegated'



'Melissa Ann'



'Paul Haskee'



'Sea Foam'

'Lauren Tudor' had 21. All these wins were in the Northern California camellia shows In the nine ca-

flower which shades to pink isn't impressive in a show cup that seems to swallow it but, with its petals and petal-



'Tiny Princess'

oids standing in the center, it does look like a "Tiny Princess." This cultivar was bred by K. Sawada and is a popular plant in the Southeast that we rarely ever see locally.

Also missing in Southern California shows is 'Kiku-Toji', a small deep red flower blotched white. Available in Japan since 1895, it won 77 points in the 2011 camellia shows in the Southeast.

Also, why don't we see 'Punkin'? This small rose pink tiered formal



'Punkin'

only won 15 points. Why is this?

Speaking of tiered formal double camellias, we don't see 'Les Marbury', a pink and white flower, or 'Les Marbury Red' in California, but their clear bright colors win points in other areas of the country. In general, I am not attracted to the tiered formal double flower form, but these two cultivars have changed my mind. They look great!

In general, I think popularity is highly influenced by familiarity. Unless



'Kiku-Toji'

double hybrid with incurved petals has outer petals shading lighter pink at center. It was introduced in 1966 in Northern California by Harry Novik, yet this cultivar is rarely seen in Southern California. It wins many show points in the Atlantic Regional camellia shows but not here. In fact, it won 58 points in 2013 while 'Freedom Bell', a cultivar popular throughout the States



'Les Marbury Red'

a new song, band, actor, movie, cereal, drink or camellia is publicized, it will never gain a following. Millions of dollars for advertisement and public appearances do this for thousands of products and entertainers. Every year the TV show "American Idol" creates new stars. The winners and even the losers are interviewed on other TV programs and discussed in magazines

like 'People.' There is limited publicity for plants. In addition, even major commercial nurseries catalogs tout seeds, annual flowers, perennials and trees, but many have no camellias listed. Traditionally, camellia cultivars gain popularity in the camellia world at camellia shows and camellia society meetings. More recently web sites and digital photography has helped increased interest. Books and magazines certainly help once people become interested in camellias.

There are at least three factors that are involved in a camellia's popularity. First and foremost, the cultivar must reliably produce beautiful flowers distinct from other camellias. Second, it should be attractive and relatively easy to grow. Third, it must be available in sufficient numbers. Size is not a key to popularity, but clear bright colors and distinguishing markings seem to help. Popular show flower winners tend to have more complicated forms; very few single flowers outside the species class become winners.

Why are some camellia cultivars popular in one country or region of America? One factor is where a camellia is introduced. If introduced in the United States, it is most likely to be first distributed locally. Some cultivars are distributed to family and friends and never gain widespread interest. Some camellias bred and propagated by nurseries in the South are never seen in California. This is even more likely if the cultivars were bred in Australia or New Zealand. However, choice cultivars do become desired internationally. For example, 'Nicky Crisp', a hybrid seedling from New Zealand, and 'John Hunt' from Australia are

admired worldwide. Additionally, there are numerous southern-bred camellias that are also popular in California such as 'Glen 40' from Alabama, 'Frank Houser' from Georgia, 'Miss Charleston Variegated' from South Carolina and 'Lady Laura' from Florida, just to name a few.

The main reason a camellia cultivar becomes popular in California is that it is propagated here in this state. Today in California, Nuccio's Nurseries is the main camellia nursery. They began in 1935 and have continued to introduce new camellias and propagate hundreds of wonderful cultivars. In the last twenty-five years, almost all camellia plants in California have come from this world-famous source. Yes, large growers like Monrovia Nurseries distribute camellias, but they sell a very limited number of camellia cultivars to the general public and not the rare and diverse varieties sought by camellia enthusiasts. Before 1985, Kramer Brothers, McCaskill and 30 other small nurseries, now out of business, introduced interesting new camellias in California. Some of their introductions can be found throughout the U.S. During the last twenty-five years, Southern Californians have gotten almost all their camellias from Nuccio's. In other words, if they don't propagate a cultivar, it is unlikely to be seen here. There are many very good nurseries and camellia breeders in the East but, unless they do mail order or the California grower is highly motivated to get cuttings or scions from the other coast, the cultivar is never seen locally.

Editor's note: Thanks, Gene Phillips, for your photos of 'Cile Mitchell' and 'Kiku Toji'. Other photos were provided by the author.



When I go into the garden, I forget everything. It's uncomplicated in my world of gardening. It's trial and error, really. If something doesn't work, it comes out, and you start all over again.

— Emilia Fox

TALKING WITH THE NUCCIOS

Text and Photos by Bradford King

It is always fun to visit Nuccio's Nurseries where everyone is greeted warmly. Almost every gardener in Southern California has visited at least once in their lifetime and camellia and azalea enthusiasts have visited multiple times. I have been to Nuccio's many times each season for over twenty-five years. Yes, I usually go home with a new camellia, but it is a rare visit when I haven't learned something new! Sometimes it is about camellia culture; other times it's camellia names or bits of Nuccio family history.

I took camellia flowers from my home garden for identification on my first visit to Nuccio's Nurseries in 1987. Jude Nuccio quickly identified all but one and provided the correct spellings for each variety. He was stumped by a medium white semidouble flower until his Uncle Julius was asked to identify it. Julius knew it immediately as 'Alba Superba'. This cultivar is pre 1900 and is thus known as an "Antique" or "Heritage" camellia. It was imported from Europe to Magnolia Gardens and Plantation in the 1840's by the Drayton family of South Carolina. The Huntington Garden has a great specimen on the left walkway to the Japanese Garden very near the ceremonial bell.



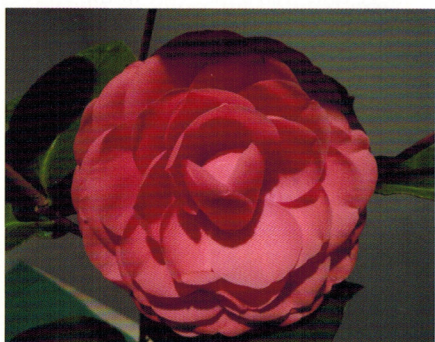
'Alba Superba'

On a recent visit Jim Nuccio was wearing a Santa Clara Crew T shirt. Since this visit was during the summer Olympics, I asked about it. Tom gave it to him as a joke and Jim was planning to wear it in silent protest until Tom reacted. Yes, we boys are competitive about sports, colleges attended and most things those of you from Planet Venus don't get. But, did you know that Tom Nuccio went to Santa Clara College and was a member of the crew? Have you noticed that Tom stops and picks every weed he sees in the nursery? I try unsuccessfully to follow this example in my garden.

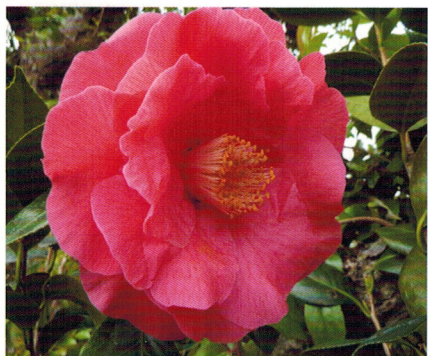
Jim told me his father Julius was a big fan of hand watering because it was a time to closely observe the plants. Jim then said that, while hand watering recently, he found a camellia incorrectly mixed with other camellias. The next evening while hand watering late in the afternoon during another 100° day in August, I observed several four foot dark green weeds thriving among the camellias. I may have walked past them 20 times and not seen them. On another visit to Nuccio's I watched Jude hand watering plants and thought how relaxed, peaceful and content he appeared. As we talked I asked him about it. Yes, he finds it peaceful and stress free. This is my experience too. Hand watering is a very important task but also a relaxing one.

It is always a pleasure to hear the spontaneous stories told by Jude, Tom and Jim. For example, Joe and Julius Nuccio, the founding fathers of the nursery, named one of their first camellia introductions in 1950 for their mother Katherine. 'Katherine Nuccio' is a rose red medium formal double flower. Katherine's favorite camellia was 'Drama Girl', a very large deep salmon rose pink semidouble bloom

introduced in 1950 by E. W. Miller of Escondido, California. When seeds from 'Drama Girl' were propagated by the Nuccio's, one developed a very large semidouble salmon rose pink that bloomed early to midseason on a vigorous compact upright plant. Since Katherine was a "traditionally built" Italian American woman, known by all as "Katie," this coral pink flower was named in her honor. I have enjoyed 'Katie' for years and have appreciated it as being one of the largest and most beautiful japonica flowers. It was a bonus to learn the origin of the flower name.



'Katherine Nuccio'



'Katie'

During another visit I asked Tom and Jude why they named the two-toned pink formal double flower with incurved petals 'Joe Nuccio'. Tom said his father Julius persuaded them when Jude recalled that his father really liked this flower. That was the clincher for



'Joe Nuccio'

them. 'Joe Nuccio' is a great camellia that commemorates one of the founding fathers of Nuccio's Nurseries. This nonreticulata hybrid is a seedling of 'Garden Glory'.

Joe Nuccio was the oldest son of Guilio and Katherine Nuccio. Joe and his younger brother Julius began to grow gardenias in the backyard in the Nuccio family home in Alhambra, California in the 1930's and sold them to local nurseries. The two brothers began to propagate camellias and azaleas to sell which led them to grow seedlings hoping to produce new cultivars.

When Julius went into the Army at the beginning of World War II, Joe built a lath house in his backyard in Santa Monica to house all their stock plants. He and his wife Mary had a baby boy they named Julius who we now know as Jude. Joe worked during the war as a shipwright. When Julius returned from the war, the two brothers moved the nursery business to Altadena, California which is the present location of Nuccio's Nurseries. Today the Nursery is run by Joe's son Jude and Julius' two sons Tom and Jim. Nuccio's Nurseries has introduced 206 camellias and 114 azaleas since 1935 — and still counting. In 2013 they introduced 'Showboat', a large white non-reticulata hybrid with red on the beautiful incurved petals.



'Showboat'



'San Dimas Variegated'

In 2015 'Julius Nuccio', a large semi-double red flowering japonica, will commemorate the 96 year old surviving founder of the nursery. Recently they proclaimed that there will be no further camellias bearing the family name.

According to the Nuccio family, we got it wrong in the Camellia Nomenclature, and so did International Camellia Registry, when credit for originating 'San Dimas' was given to Clark Thomas of San Dimas, California. Clark Thomas wanted a red camellia to plant at the town hall to honor his home town of San Dimas. The Nuccio's granted his wish and named a medium to large dark red semidouble irregular flower with occasional petaloids 'San Dimas'. It is a reliable early to midseason bloomer and its variegated form is a show winner.

Clark Thomas is the person who caught a beautiful sport from 'C. M. Wilson'. It was first introduced by Paul Gains Nursery in 1969 and called 'C. M. Wilson Splendor'. In 1971 it was propagated and widely distributed by Nuccio's Nurseries of Altadena, California and renamed 'Elegans Splendor' upon the recommendation of Julius Nuccio. Julius may be 96 and retired from the Nurseries but remains sharp as a tack. He is the one who keeps us all straightened out. 'Elegans Splendor' is considered by many to be the most beautiful of all of the 'Elegans' family mutations. This large to very large anemone form has light pink flowers with white edges on deeply serrated petals.

Do you know how 'Royal Velvet' got named? Jim was sitting on the "throne" looked down at the dark red



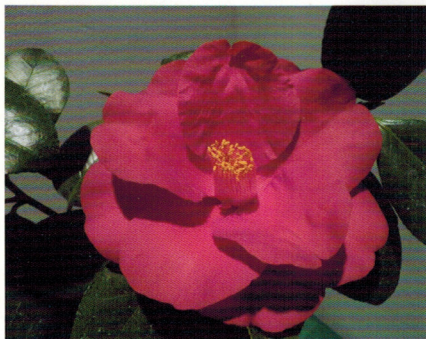
'San Dimas'



'Elegans Supreme'

bathroom mat. When he turned it over and read the label "Royal Velvet." He announced the discovery of a fitting name for this dark red flower with velvet-like petals.

How did Nuccio's come up with the



'Royal Velvet'

name for the large white semidouble flower 'Tata'? When you look up "Tata" it is a colloquialism used to say "good bye" and means "Daddy" in Italian. However, neither is the origin for this camellia. Tom and Jim called their aunt "Tata" when young and unable to say her full name. It is an affectionate name for their mother's sister and a good name for the large to very large white semidouble flower that blooms among large leaves on a very strong upright somewhat spreading plant.

The International Camellia Society has initiated a long-term project of identifying ancient camellias and other notable camellias such as the Nuccio's Nurseries introductions. I have agreed to provide, with the help and permission of the Nuccios, descriptions and digital photos of all the Nuccio's camellia introductions towards this ICS goal in order to have a complete, accurate



'Tata'

and comprehensive record of those introductions for future generations. I call this the "Methuselah Project" after the oldest person mentioned in the Hebrew Bible and for the oldest living tree. "Methuselah" is a Great Basin Bristlecone Pine in the Methuselah Grove of the Ancient Bristlecone Pine Forest in the White Mountains of Inyo County, California.

At least 30 Nuccio introductions are no longer included in their most recent catalog. Nuccios have specimens of some of these cultivars but not all. The 1960 'Warrior' (below) can be found in Descanso Gardens but not at Nuccio's.



We learn from our gardens to deal
with the most urgent question of the time:

How much is enough?

— Wendell Berry



L - R Reg Ragland, President of SCCS, Julius Nuccio, Joe Nuccio, and Bill Woodroof, Editor of the *Camellia Nomenclature*. The event is the awarding of the Illges Japonica Seedling Award to the Nuccios for 'Grand Slam' in 1969.

"LOOK WHAT HAPPENED TO SEEDLING NO. 131"

Anonymous

Camellia Review, January 1976

A "Camellia-nut" is a mixture of many traits. Perhaps their biggest "hang-ups" are generosity and the desire to possess the latest, hottest new Camellia. That certain bloom — the one — that sets you apart from all other Camellia people. You don't speak out loud about it — only whisper in secret of this magnificent bloom! Now, we cannot deny that sharing with your fellow man is a most admirable trait but let's face it — it's raising havoc with many ardent camellia lovers and especially with our (camellia) commercial nurseryman!

Everywhere the Camellia hybridizer is busy. Working like a "bee" waiting and hoping for that Camellia, you know, the one the world has been waiting for. Never admitting defeat, each year the hybridizer keeps at his

work until one day Seedling #13 (or whatever number) bursts into bloom. What a sight! Most unusual! Enthusiasm is uncontrolled — this wonderful development has to be shared! So off to the phone with invitations going out to the buddies to come and see this "new seedling bloom." This is great, too, as everyone needs approval and the exchange of ideas, but does it stop there? No! Before these friends leave each clutches a scion in his "hot grafting hand" and he feels like a C.I.A. agent on a secret mission.

From that time on sharing the "Seedling #13" increases. Every camellia grower who's "in" has a scion and the "graft" has started. West to South, South to West scions of #13 are passed. Even in far off lands "up there" and "down under" the #13 is flourishing

through Camellia lovers SHARING. Not yet though is #13 registered with The American Camellia Society or has it been propagated and on the market by our commercial nurseryman, but all of the "big collectors" proudly possess #13.

Is this fair to the nurseryman or to the thousands of camellia growers, i.e., those not in the "sharing" group. Every year the camellia nurseryman spends hundreds of dollars and an endless amount of time in propagating camellias for everyone's enjoyment. Only he can introduce these new varieties in quantity with availability to the public. He, too, is working diligently on new varieties for all to enjoy. This is his love and his livelihood. His interest in our hobby is for all not a favored few. Why then, "Mr. Hybridizer," do you pass out scions of your new seedlings so promiscuously? If Camellias and

Camellia Societies are to continue the introduction of new varieties, it must be done through a commercial (camellia) nurseryman. He is our friend and deserves our cooperation.

Through our nurseryman your lucky new seedling can "go places." All that's required is (1) contact your Camellia nurseryman (one who propagates camellias) regarding your new seedlings, (2) say "No, emphatically to all the "seedling scion" collectors. Tell them it is being propagated by a nursery and will be available through him and his colleagues. This is the only way to go!

Every hybridizer owes this respect and cooperation to the commercial nurseryman and to the Camellia world. Nurseries specializing in Camellias are very few and all need the opportunity to introduce and sell the outstanding new varieties. Let's all support Camellias and Camellia nurseryman everywhere.

PERMANENT CONTAINER MULCH

David L. Feathers

Camellia Review, October 1975

Editor's Note: Last summer, Dave Feathers said that his permanent mulch was still working beautifully. I have looked at back copies of Camellia Review and found that it had been seven years since we ran his article on the subject (January 1968). It is worth a re-run. (Bill Donnan, Editor, 1975.)

Editor's Note: Almost 45 years later in 2014, during a time of emphasis on water conservation, another re-run seems appropriate. (Bobbie Belcher, Editor, 2014)

When it comes to camellia culture practices, there is more than one way of skinning the cat, as the saying goes. This is true of mulches as it is of soil mixes and fertilization techniques. For several years past, we had been using coarse compost and then fir bark to top off our containers. These and any other humus material have several disadvantages. This was realized in a half-hearted way but it was not until the lady of the house began to complain bitterly about having to clean up the mess on the patios made by birds and, the last straw, opossums that we began seriously to investigate other materials.

Several years ago, in an endeavor to insulate the soil against petal blight, I

conceived the idea of placing two or three inches of gravel throughout on the ground covered by our lath house. We had a half dozen large camellias planted in the ground in this section and to raise them would have been a problem. It was my thought that, because of the porosity of the gravel mulch, this would not cause injury to the plants which would then be at a depth several inches below the desirable level. This has proven to be the case, while watering and fertilizing through the gravel have actually been facilitated, primarily because dry fertilizer no longer cakes and watering causes no mud film to form. In essence, we now have a filtering medium be-

tween the roots and water or fertilizer.

Pondering upon this successful experiment, it seemed to offer a solution to our problem. Experimentally, we had tried using a 1/4" x 1/2" gravel mulch on a dozen or two plants in wooden tubs on a paved terrace. This was not an ideal test, for some of the tubs did not have sufficient space above the soil level in which to place the most desirable thickness of gravel mulch about 2". However, we went ahead with the test notwithstanding the thickness of the mulch varying from perhaps 3/4" to 2" of gravel. These plants were in a fairly sunny area, and the first gravel mulching was done in the summer of 1966. An improvement in the foliage and general appearance of the plants was noted within a couple of months. Evidently these camellias appreciated the rock insulation we had provided and were responding accordingly.

This past summer we have made gravel mulching a standard practice with respect to all camellias in the larger containers, irrespective of exposure — sun, semi-shade or shade. The response has been most gratifying and peace has been restored in the household. So far, we have not had a single adverse development. On the other hand, the following definite advantages have been observed.

1. The litter problem has been completely eliminated — neither birds nor animals have ever scattered the gravel about.
2. There have been no weeds whatsoever and fallen leaves are easily removed from the top of the gravel.
3. Watering has been greatly facilitated — the crushed gravel locks together so securely that one need not attach a water wand or other diffuser to the hose, from which the water may be applied directly without disturbing the mulch.
4. Dry fertilizer filters right down through — there is no caking.
5. Perfect insulation against flower

blight results — there is no contact of flowers with the soil.

6. Desirable weight is added to the container, thus helping avoid damage to larger plants blown down by heavy winds.

7. The root level is not raised as with humus, but stays right at the top of the soil level, thus remaining constant.

8. Perhaps best of all, a gravel mulch is absolutely permanent — never needs replacement.

We use what is called "black and tan" 1/4" x 1/2" and buy it by the yard as we also use it extensively on our paths. It costs about \$10 a yard here delivered. Of course, one can buy rock of different colors to get whatever effect is desired.

A friend of mine here who has over 100 camellias has found the very coarse fir bark (1" to 2") excellent for mulching camellias in the ground. I have been amazed at how well it protects them from the hot sun and, like the gravel, it does not draw up the roots although it is not as easy to keep in place.

Looking at it from another angle, perhaps we might go a step further and use gravel in our soil mix. It is far more natural to the camellia than sponge rock or vermiculite and, especially if used in conjunction with a heavy percentage of water-retaining humus, such as peat moss and compost, would seem to provide almost an ideal medium, especially for camellia types such as *reticulata* to which perfect drainage is so vital. It is possible there may also be some mineral value to gravel. This year we are using some minus 1/4" sand and gravel from our creek in the soil mix and perhaps may learn more about this as a result.

Editor's note: If you have tried mixing some gravel with your soil, let us know the results. I did not find a follow-up report from Mr. Feathers. I also suspect that the gravel is more than \$10 a yard in 2014.

Below left: 'Salab', a David Feathers introduction. If you check the Non-Reticulata section of the 2014 Camellia Nomenclature, you will see 'Salab' used rather extensively as a parent plant in New Zealand. Don Bergamini, Martinez, California, used 'Salab' as a parent plant for his 'Just Peachy'.

Below right: 'Desire', another David Feathers introduction. When Rudy Moore was grafting at Huntington years ago he asked someone to bring him a cutting of 'Desire'. His southern accent must have sounded like something else because Rudy later discovered his new graft looked very much like 'The Czar'.



'Salab'



'Desire'



BARE ROOTING CAMELLIAS

Son Hackney

Camellia Review, Vol. 32, May 1971

I use a mix of one-half rotted sawdust, 30% earth, 10% pine bark about the size of the end of my little finger and 10% coarse creek sand. If anybody doubts the value of sawdust, he should put a plant with bad roots into the pure sawdust and let it stay for a while. After a few months in the sawdust, he will find that the plant has a good set of roots.

I bare root my plants in the second and third week of August . . . I prepare several of the new containers ahead of time, first putting a couple of inches of the coarse bark in the bottom of the can. I then build a mound of the soil around which I place the roots after the old soil has been washed off. I am careful when I remove the plants from the old container not to break or injure the roots. I place the plants in containers full of water and let them soak until

the soil is thoroughly wet and can be removed without root injury. This may be a few minutes or two hours depending on the nature of the soil in the old container. I have a stream at the back of my house and I bare root the plants over this stream so that the old soil will go into the stream and be washed away. I don't want any of it to remain in my yard. I then use a fine spray of water to wash off all the remaining soils, being careful not to injure the roots. I prune off any roots that appear to be injured. I also dispose of this remaining old soil.

I then place the plant in the new container, carefully placing the roots around the mound that I have made. I try to have the roots within an inch or

Continued on page 24

ABOUT *C. JAPONICA* 'ASTRONAUT'

When Camellia Hobbyists correspond, it's fun and often informative to read their e-mails! Joe and Linda Tunner wrote to Marvin Belcher on June 9, 2014; Marvin quickly responded and then the Tunners subsequently used Marvin's letter to make their interspersing comments in red. Enjoy their joint effort! Marvin Belcher lives in Bakersfield, California, and Joe and Linda live in Encinitas, California. The two cities are 200+ miles apart, but the couples see one another during the camellia season at shows from Bakersfeld to SanDiego. Here is their correspondence:

From: Joseph Tunner
Sent: Monday, June 09, 2014 7:36 AM
To: marvinbelcher
Subject: Astronaut graft pictures

Hi Marv and Virginia,

Linda has long wanted to send you pictures of the Astronaut graft that took, unfortunately the early pictures have been lost. Here are some newer ones.

We were so hoping for two grafts, but after looking good all the way to the end, what was green turned brown in one of the grafts. We suspect that it was the disease, which does prey on the grafts heavily here, because they are so small and weak. It is now threatening Shinome, a rare Higo graft given to us by Karen and George, but we have our fingers crossed.

The new Astronaut survived the heat wave here, which was extreme for us (92-104DF with less than 12% humidity) - many camellias were damaged during the first wave and Linda was watering every day during the second, when the fires were coming. This plant has not shown any growth hormone defect signs, which we see in so many camellias from other sources, which means that if the flowering hormones for form, size and color can come through, this camellia will span Sunset Climate Zones 24 (us) to SCZ 8/9 (you guys) Linda feels that this is now an 80 - 90% probability, because there has been no signs of shrinkage (growth hormone defect) and that is the most damaging first effect of a camellia that can not survive SCZ 24. If there is evidence to us that the flower can form, and this could take 2 - 3 years to see, then this plant should be aggressively propagated and we will try to see that this is done.

The next hurdle will be to see if this SCZ 8/9 proven flower can attain size - medium here (SCZ 24). We are not so concerned about form - that is bound to vary, but hope for the best. We will likely see a higher incidence of petaloids on the stamens which is unfortunate. FYI Showboat is a total disaster here, the flowers are tiny and insipid and partial shrinkage has already surfaced in the growth phase. Astronaut, so far shows none of this. The two mature leaves have excellent size, curvature and the deep green color. We have also observed that this variety is particularly sun tolerant, although it has been so valuable, that we have kept it relatively shaded.

We wanted to tell you both all of this to say how grateful we were for your cuttings. Hopefully we will be able to continue with the good news and if so, we will definitely continue to graft it and distribute this amazing flower.

Many thanks and well wishes,
Linda & Joe



Hi Marv, great to hear from you, please see notes below in red.

From: Marvin Belcher [mailto:marvinbelcher@sbcglobal.net]
Sent: Monday, June 09, 2014 10:23 PM
To: Joseph Tunner
Cc: marvinbelcher
Subject: RE: Astronaut graft pictures

Hi Joe and Linda,

I was thrilled to receive your email pictures and progress report on your graft of Astronaut, medium Japonica. The pictures show a very healthy plant, good growth and very healthy leaves. I wish you continued success. The mother plant is doing well; so if you have desire for more scions next Spring I will be happy to share.

We do want to try more grafts; could you bring one or two cuttings to the first or second show next year?

We are currently experiencing hot weather, to be expected, in Bakersfield. Plants look surprisingly well, for which I am grateful.

Since I have only one Astronaut plant, and your enthusiasm matched mine for the variety, it occurred to me that I also should attempt to graft this variety. Having virtually no plants for grafting understock, I bought four healthy Kramer's Supreme plants, not my favorite variety for understock, but they were available.

We like this variety as understock for here. It is strong and resistant to disease and uses very little water.

Of the four grafts attempted, one did not take; three looked good. Then I made a mistake that I will share with you. I knew it was risky, but in previous years I had good luck in giving a very light, perhaps one-tenth of normal, strength solution liquid fish fertilizer. This seemed to give the new grafts a boost that they would not otherwise have. Conventional wisdom is that new grafts should have no fertilizer boost for the first year. Consequently, or for another unknown reason, I lost one of the three grafts. Two grafts continue to do well. My yard is well shaded with

sun screen and lathe, but with Bakersfield heat I try to err on the side of too much, rather than too little, shade.

We have fed *Astronaut* a light $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp serving of 16:16:16 granular, partially slow-release fertilizer. Before that, we have given him servings of used coffee grounds twice now. We pot up our root stock into clay pots 6 - 9 months before grafting. It helps the root stock get established, but tends to deplete the soil in the pot. By the time the graft gets going, the soil is too poor. You have to give it something.

Joe and Linda, let's stay in touch with our interest in *Astronaut*. My mother plant is a graft from a prize winning *Astronaut* from the yard of my good friend, now deceased, Dr. Richard Stiern. That plant died soon after my graft. I do not know of another *Astronaut*. It is indeed a "keeper" variety!

What do you think of this idea? How about submitting our email letters, with appropriate editing, for publication in the Review, published by the SCCS. They seem always to be looking for material.

We like your idea. We should include pictures of the flower, the mother plant, and the grafting pictures, yours and ours, in color. Also, do you have a photo of Dr. Stiern? Linda found a reference in the 1971 ACS yearbook to a Walter Stiern in Bakersfield. Is he related to Richard?

Would you be willing to edit the article (we use Joe's work computer so it is hard for us to do lengthy text manipulations.). We would be willing to proof-read and provide feedback when you finish. We would look forward to a draft article on the subject and to the opportunity to collaborate.

Once again, it is not sure that the plant will flower, or the flowers will form correctly, but at least it is growing, and that is a HUGE step forward.

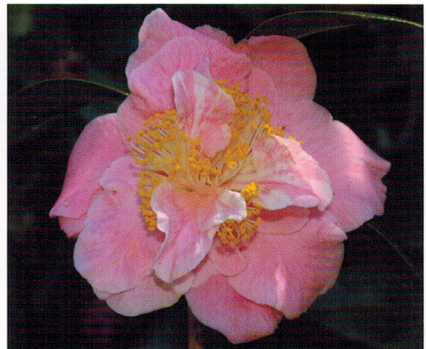
Thank you so much for your enthusiasm, Linda and Joe Tunner

Thanks again for sharing.

Marvin and Virginia



'Astronaut'



'Glenn's Orbit'

Continued on p. 20

The discussion of 'Astronaut' brings back memories. Where were you in 1962 when John Glenn became the first man to orbit the earth? Were you trying to see if you actually could see that happening? And do you remember looking up at the moon in 1969 knowing that there was a man standing on its surface? Stirling Macoboy made interesting discussions about names of some camellias during this time.

Macoboy's description is quoted as follows for 'Astronaut': "The space race was on in earnest during the 60's and 70's, and rather than name their new cultivar after yet another titled lady or beautiful movie star, the originators, Select Nursery of California, chose to launch with a topical name 'Astronaut'.

A quick look through the Nomenclature showed some other "moon" names. Some of these moon names are 'Carolina Moon', 'Dark of the Moon', 'Harvest Moon', 'Moonflower', 'Moonlight Bay', 'Moonlight Sonata', 'Red Moon', 'Silver Moon', 'Desert Moon', 'Moonrise', 'Moon Festival', 'Carolina Moonlight', 'Moonbeam', 'Moonsong', 'Moonstruck', 'Winter's Moonlight', 'Autumn Moon', 'Misty Moon', 'Pale Moonlight' and others. There's just something about that light we see in the sky in the night that continues to fascinate us!

Earlier this year there seemed to be discussions about whether or not to continue the space program in the United States and something you may not know about Neil Armstrong has become public recently,* perhaps because of the that discussion. The information made it to "Facebook" on the internet and is quoted here:

"On July 20, 1969, as commander of the Apollo 11 lunar module, Neil Armstrong was the first person to set foot on the moon.

His first words after stepping on the moon, "That's one small step for man,

one giant leap for mankind," were televised to earth and heard by millions. But just before he re-entered the lander, he made the enigmatic remark – "Good luck, Mr. Gorsky."

Many people at NASA thought it was a casual remark concerning some rival Soviet cosmonaut. However, upon checking, there was no Gorsky in either the Russian or American space programs. Over the years, many people questioned Armstrong as to what the "Good luck, Mr. Gorsky" statement meant, but Armstrong always just smiled.

On July 5, 1995, in Tampa Bay, Florida, while answering questions following a speech, a reporter brought up the 26-year-old question about Mr. Gorsky to Armstrong. This time he finally responded because Mr. Gorsky had died, so Neil Armstrong felt he could now answer the question. Here is the answer to

"Who was Mr. Gorsky?"

In 1938, when he was a kid in a small mid-western town, he was playing baseball with a friend in the backyard. His friend hit the ball, which landed in his neighbor's yard by their bedroom window. His neighbors were Mr. and Mrs. Gorsky. As he leaned down to pick up the ball, young Armstrong heard Mrs. Gorsky shouting at Mr. Gorsky, "Sex! You want sex! You'll get sex when the kid next door walks on the moon!"

It broke the place up."

Neil Armstrong's family confirmed this is a true story.

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A vegetable garden in the beginning looks so promising and then, after all, little by little it grows nothing but vegetables, nothing, nothing but vegetables.

Gertrude Stein

Gardening is cheaper than therapy — and you get tomatoes! (or camellias blooms)

NEWS FROM SAVANNAH, GEORGIA

Gene Phillips

CamelliaShop Nursery was started in Savannah, Georgia a little over 60 years ago. It was originally known as Gene's Nursery, but the name was changed when we started shipping camellias across America. We are a retail online source for camellias, and we ship our plants in their pots to all states within the continental United States.

We develop many of our own camellias, and we seek out many other varieties that would be of interest to our customers. CamelliaShop Nursery is constantly discovering and evaluating many great camellias developed near and far over the years. There are many outstanding older varieties that have fallen through the cracks over time. Discovering and re-introducing these older camellias has been a pleasure to our business.

CamelliaShop Nursery is an online source for camellias. We do not have a printed catalog, but our online provides detailed information and exciting images about the camellias that we offer. We take great pride in our methods of shipping camellias to our customers. Packing the plants correctly is the key to a safe delivery and a happy customer. We ship our camellias from October

through March when temperatures are not too hot.

In order to provide our customers with the most up-to-date information about camellias, we created an online Blog called The Camellia Gardener. It is the official digital publication for CamelliaShop Nursery. Viewers can read many informative articles about camellias, care and culture, gardens featuring camellias, and other great camellia gardeners. You can visit the blog site often to see what is new, or you can subscribe and have any new articles come to your inbox in an e-mail.

You can visit CamelliaShop Nursery's website at www.camelliashop.com and you can visit The Camellia Gardener Blog at www.camelliagardener.com

Editor's note: When I asked Gene about the nursery of 60 years ago, he directed me to a link that tells "the rest of the story." What started as a small business in a back yard, is still in business today. Read the rest of the story on the following pages.

Gene says he is particularly fond of the image below of 'Frankie Winn'.



THE REST OF THE STORY . . .

"It was never in his plan to become a nurseryman and grow camellias. He always wanted to become a fireman like his father before him, and that is just what he did. He began his career in the Savannah Fire Department and later took a job working civil service in the Fire Department of what was then Hunter Air Force Base in Savannah, Georgia. Within 3 years of working on the air force fire department, he became the chief with over 100 firemen working under his direction. His father and fireman inspiration Henry Phillips retired from the Savannah Fire Department and took a job in the Hunter Air Force Base Fire Department work-

ing for his son , the fire chief. All was well with the world until December 7, 1941. On that day, everything changed forever.

He was known by many names and many nicknames growing up in Savannah, but to most he was simply called Gene. Like most young men, Gene answered the call to serve his country despite being a 27 year old chief of a fire department. His love for this work would have to wait. There were more important things to do in the world at that time, and his new role would take him around the world on a US navy ship called the USS Navarro. This ship was a troop carrier, and Gene's new



Some Savannah favorites:

Above: 'Frankie Winn Variegated'
Below: 'Lindsey'

Above: 'Tama Glitters'
Below: 'Melissa Ann'



job had him driving landing crafts onto the Japanese Islands for invasions from the United States. During one landing, his craft was hit by artillery from the island. He woke up 12 days later in a naval hospital on the Hawaiian Islands never to be the same. The doctors there did not have much hope that Gene would even survive. After several months, he was

sent home severely disabled. His dream of being a fireman was shattered forever, but Gene soon found another dream that would change his life.

His doctors suggested that he find something to do that he liked to help keep his mind off his health problems. Gene started growing azaleas by taking cuttings from his mother's garden. That lasted a few years until one winter's day he saw a camellia blooming in his mother's garden. He never could have imagined how seeing a bloom of 'Daikagura' would completely transform his direction. From that moment until the day he died, Gene fell head over heels in love with camellias. He learned everything about them. He studied them from books and asking experts. Then he learned to graft camellias. He grafted 100's of camellias every year, and then he built several small greenhouses. He would keep his camellias in containers outside during the warm season and then move them into the greenhouses during the winter. Gene would have his very own camellia show every day in his camellia sanctuary. Gene started selling his grafted camellias at his small nursery in Savannah. Back then, it was not called CamelliaShop Nursery. It

was simply known as Gene's Nursery. Camellia fanciers from near and far would come by to purchase Gene's grafted camellias. It was not the dream that he once had as a child, but growing camellias became the new dream that made Gene's life complete.

Gene left us in 1973, but his dream continued through his son Little Gene and later through Little Gene's business partners Debbie and Benny Odom. The camellias are no longer grown in coffee cans like they were when the original Gene was here. The plants are no longer grafted. We now grow all our camellias from rooted cuttings. Every year, we root tens of thousands of camellias. We are no longer known as Gene's Nursery, but are now known as CamelliaShop Nursery where we ship small camellias to every state within the continental United States. Some things have changed over the years with our nursery, but the one thing that will always remain is for us to put the same love into every single camellia we produce that Gene did in every graft. We think that Gene is looking down with a big smile on his face as he sees what his nursery has become. Now you know a little bit of the rest of the story and why all of us at CamelliaShop Nursery love camellias

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"Sharing makes camellias more exciting to everyone."

— Gene Phillips

ABOUT SHARING . . .

On the previous page, you may have noticed Gene Phillips quote about sharing. Over twenty years ago then Editor Mel Belcher published a list of suggestions about how a camellia hobbyist might share with readers of the *Camellia Review*. Here's that list again. It would be great to have some sharing going on!!

1. Camellia culture for the new hobbyist
2. Best varieties for the new camellia hobbyist
3. My favorite fifty (or fewer) varieties
4. If I could only have ten plants . . .
5. Patio culture
6. How camellia competition can be compatible with condominium living
7. Camellias for landscaping vs. camellias for competition
8. Information on new varieties
9. How new varieties can be more readily available
10. Characteristics of a good camellia show judge
11. Camellia shows and the general public
12. How to get your blooms to the head table
13. Why we are getting fewer young people into camellia societies
14. Fundamentals of fertilizing
15. Who is doing research in camellias (shade tree research variety as well as technical variety)
16. The camellia garden of the month
17. Good ground cover for the camellia garden

There's plenty of room in our mailbox at 2531 2nd Street, La Verne, CA 91750 or in my email box at bobbiebelcher@gmail.com. If you have photos to share, please be sure they are of a high resolution and in a jpeg format. Thanks.

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Advice from a tree

Stand tall and proud
Go out on a limb
Remember your roots
Drink plenty of water

Continued from page 16

so of the edge of the can believing that camellias do better if they are near root bound than if they are over planted. I see to it that the soil completely fills the new container, watering the plant thoroughly and making sure that there are no air pockets. I then mulch with the coarse bark that I have used in the bottom of the container.

When I have bare rooted a large plant, I prune the plant so that the roots in the new soil will not have to carry so much plant. I sprinkle the newly planted camellia twice a day, the first thing in the morning and at the end of the day. I put the plants under heavy shade so that they will not dehydrate themselves before they are established in the new soil — 30 to 60 days.

DIRECTORY OF CALIFORNIA CAMELLIA SOCIETIES

ATWATER GARDEN CLUB & CAMELLIA SOCIETY: President – Kathleen Hill, 2419 Koehn Court, Atwater 95301 (209) 357-0782. Meetings 3rd Tuesday, September - June, 6:30 p.m. St. Nicholas Episcopal Church, 1635 Shaffer Road, Atwater

KERN COUNTY, CAMELLIA SOCIETY OF: President – Susan Stull; Secretary – Libbie Stull, 406 Vista Verde Way, Bakersfield 93309. For meeting dates and times call Helen Maas (661) 872-2188.

MODESTO, CAMELLIA SOCIETY OF: President – Sharon Adams; Secretary – Marvin Bort. Meetings: 2nd Sunday, October - April. 1:30-4:40, 7th Day Adventist Church, G & 16th Street, Modesto.

NAPA VALLEY CAMELLIA SOCIETY: President – Nancy McGowen Russell; Secretary – Fran Kane, fkane@sonicnet. Meetings: 2nd Monday, September - May, Napa Senior Center, 1500 Jefferson St., Napa.

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA CAMELLIA SOCIETY: President – Robert Ehrhart; Secretary – Mary Bergamini, 2023 Huntridge Ct., Martinez 94553. Meetings: 1st Monday, November - April, 7:00 pm. 1st Baptist Church, 2336 Buena Vista Ave., Walnut Creek. December and May are dinner meetings.

PACIFIC CAMELLIA SOCIETY: President – George Harrison. Meetings: 1st Thursday November - April, 7:00 p.m., Descanso Gardens, La Canada

POMONA VALLEY CAMELLIA SOCIETY: President – Mel Belcher; Secretary – Don Gray, d.mgray@verizon.net. Meetings 2nd Thursday, November - April, 7:00 p.m. La Verne Community Center, 3680 "D" Street, La Verne.

SACRAMENTO, CAMELLIA SOCIETY OF: President – Carol Schanz; Secretary – Joan Lesmeister 4512 Marble Way, Carmichael 95608. Meetings: 4th Monday, October - March, 7:00 p.m. Lutheran Church of the Master, 1900 Potrero Way, Sacramento.

SAN DIEGO CAMELLIA SOCIETY: President – Dean Turney, buydean@juno.com Meetings: 3rd Wednesday November - April 7:30 p.m. Room 101 Casa del Prado, Balboa Park, San Diego

SAN FRANCISCO PENINSULA CAMELLIA SOCIETY: PRESIDENT – Linda Kancev; Secretary - Karen Bartholomew, 2444 Sharon Oaks Dr., Menlo Park 94025. Meetings: 4th Monday, October - March, Veterans' Memorial Bldg Annex, Madison Street, Redwood City.

SANTA CLARA COUNTY, INC., CAMELLIA SOCIETY OF: President – John Mendoza; Secretary – Philliopa Alvis, pandjalvis@verizon.net. Meetings 3rd Wednesday, October - April, 7:30 p.m., Jameson Brown House, at Triton Museum Grounds, 1507 Warburton Ave., Santa Clara.

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA CAMELLIA SOCIETY: President – Bradford King; Secretary – Bobbie Belcher, 2531 2nd Street, La Verne 91750, bobbiebelcher@gmail.com. Meetings: 3rd Thursday October - April, 7:00 pm., Palm Room, LA County Arboretum, 301 Baldwin Ave., Arcadia. No meeting in December.



Above: 'Julius Nuccio'
Below: 'Barbara Goff'

