

The *Camellia*
REVIEW



*Julius Nuccio
Commemorative Issue*

Front Cover: 'Julius Nuccio'
Photo Credit: Brad King

Inside Cover: 'Nuccio's Carousel'
Photo Credit: Brad King



Published by the Southern California Camellia Society
socialcamelliasociety.org
Bradford King, Editor bdk@usc.edu
Kristina Hooper, Production Editor khoop3r@gmail.com
Bobbie Belcher, Corresponding Secretary & Membership
Southern California Camellia Society

© 2016, all rights reserved.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---|----|
| The Cover Photos | 2 |
| Invitation to Join | 3 |
| Officers and Directors | 4 |
| Thoughts from the Editor | 4 |
| FEATURES | |
| Dedication: Julius Nuccio | 5 |
| Nuccio's Show Winners | 11 |
| William L. Ackerman Dedication at U.S. National Arboretum | 13 |
| What Shall We Call It? | 14 |
| DEPARTMENTS | |
| Camellia Species: <i>C. amplexicaulis</i> | 18 |
| What's New at Nuccio's: Their Azaleas are Outstanding | 19 |
| Tea: The Most Important Camellia in the World | 22 |
| Camellia Art: Celebrating Nuccio's Varietals | 26 |
| From the Archives: Nuccio's 50th Anniversary (Fall 1984) | 28 |
| Parting Shot: Thru Wind and Rain | 30 |

An Invitation to Join

Annual membership - \$25 includes subscription to *The Camellia Review*, three issues per year.

Sponsoring member: \$50 Sustaining Member: \$100 Patron member: \$150

Send payment to Southern California Camellia Society,

Memberships can also be paid online at socialcamelliasociety.org.

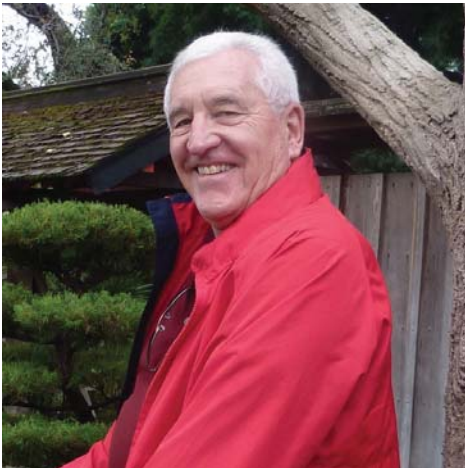
BOARD OFFICERS

| | | |
|---------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|
| President | Bradford King | bdk@usc.edu |
| Vice-President | James Fitzpatrick | JJF4849@yahoo.com |
| Treasurer | Beth Stone | bethstone@earthlink.net |
| Recording Secretary | Carol Stickley | cstickley@gmail.com |
| Membership | Bobbie Belcher | bobbiebelcher@gmail.com |

DIRECTORS

| | |
|-----------------|---------------------------|
| Anne Dashiell | anne@dashiell.net |
| Joey Goldfarb | joeyhe@aol.com |
| Kristina Hooper | khoop3r@gmail.com |
| David MacLaren | dmaclaren@huntington.com |
| Alexis Slafer | aslafer@ca.rr.com |
| Susan Stull | s-stull10@earthlink.net |
| Linda Tunner | |
| Wayne Walker | waynefredwalker@gmail.com |

Thoughts From The Editor Brad King, Editor



This issue is dedicated to Julius Nuccio who passed away on January 6, 2016. He was the co-founder of the world famous Nuccio's Nurseries located in Altadena, California. In the 1920's until the 1980's there were 30 nurseries in Southern California that specialized in growing camellias. The only one still in business is Nuccio's Nurseries founded in 1935 by Joe and Julius Nuccio. The Nursery has introduced over 200 camellia varieties since 1950.

The cover photo is the 2015 introduction 'Julius Nuccio' which has a brilliant dark red semidouble flower. The cover story is "The Julius Nuccio Dedication" article which highlights the accomplishments and awards won by Nuccio's Nurs-

eries camellia introductions with photos to illustrate those bearing the Nuccio name. What's New at Nuccio's describes some of their beautiful azaleas introductions. In "What Shall We Call It?" Bobbie Belcher tells the story of how the Nuccio's have named some of their introductions. Bill Donnan's article "Nuccio's 50th Anniversary" published in the fall 1984 issue of the Camellia Review is full of interesting historical background helping us to celebrate Julius long and productive life. Beth Stone reports in "Celebrating Nuccio's Varietals" when Nuccio's Nursery celebrated their Diamond Anniversary in 2001 the Southern California Camellia Society introduced a new Camellia Show class called "Nuccio's Introductions". Six Nuccio's introductions of high quality presented in an attractive composition. In addition in a brief article she tells us Nuccio's Show Winners in 2015. These six articles with photos illustrate the importance of Julius Nuccio's contributions to the camellia world.

Unfortunately in 2014 the camellia world also lost Dr. William "Bill" Ackerman a pioneer camellia hybridizer of fragrant and cold hardy camellias. James Fitzpatrick reports on the dedication of new signage for the 'Camellia Walk' in honor and memory of William L. Ackerman in an area of the Arboretum where Dr. Ackerman planted many of his 'cold hardy' camellia introductions.

We are always looking for camellia articles and writers to publish. Deadlines for submitting articles to Editor Brad King (bdk@usc.edu) are FALL: September 1, 2016; WINTER: December 1, 2016 and SPRING: February 1, 2017.

Julius Nuccio Dedication by Bradford King



Julius Nuccio 1969

Julius "Jude" Nuccio (August 26, 1917- January 6, 2016) lived a full and productive life dedicated to family, friends and the Nuccio's Nurseries. Julius knew when he was eleven year old that he wanted to grow camellias for a living. In the preface of Sterling Macoboy's *The Colour Dictionary of Camellias* he wrote about his love of camellias "not only as a nurseryman and grower, but also as an interested collector and hybridizer. I can remember the excitement (in the 1930s and 1940s)

of discovering long-lost varieties from the 1800s. These were in great demand, because until that time we had but few varieties of *C. japonica*, a mere scattering of *C. sasanqua* and one only *C. reticulata*, the tried and true ‘Captain Rawes’.



Nuccio's Nurseries

Julius and his older brother Joe began propagating camellias and azaleas in their parents' backyard in Alhambra California in 1935. During World II Julius served in the Army and Joe worked in a navy yard. They bought land in Altadena in the foothills of the San Gabriel Mountains near the end of the war. This was a family enterprise then, and one that continues today in Altadena where Joe's son Jude (Julius) and Julius' sons Tom and Jim continue to run the Nursery. Joe and Julius began breeding their own camellias in 1940's. In 1950 they introduced their first camellias, 'Katherine Nuccio', 'Primavera' and 'Warrior' to the public. This Camellia Review is dedicated to Julius Nuccio with photos bearing the Nuccio name to illustrate some of their most remarkable introductions. The cover photo is the 2015 introduction 'Julius Nuccio' which is the latest and last to carry the Nuccio name. A summary follows of the award winning Nuccio's Nurseries camellias which serves to highlight the reason they are known as a "World Famous Camellia and Azalea Nursery".

Nuccio's Award Winning Japonica Seedlings

Nuccio's Nurseries has introduced 209 camellias from 1950 to 2016 which includes sports and variegated cultivars. The American Camellia Society (ACS) provides awards to outstanding camellias each year. The Illges Seedling Japonica Award is given to the originator of a seedling, not a sport or mutation, each year since 1945. Nuccio's Nurseries has won this prestigious award thirteen times.

These award winning cultivars are still popular and widely distributed as they are some of the best camellias available today. They are ‘Guilio Nuccio’, ‘Grand Slam’, ‘Nuccio’s Gem’, ‘Show Time’, ‘Cherries Jubilee’, ‘Nuccio’s Jewel’, ‘Moonlight Bay’, ‘Royal Velvet’, ‘Junior Prom’, ‘Nuccio’s Bella Rossa’, ‘Grand Marshal’, ‘Black Magic’ and ‘Happy Harlequin’.



‘Black Magic’



‘Nuccio’s Gem’



‘Show Time’



‘Guilio Nuccio’

Sasanqua Winners

One of the best of all the sun camellias is Nuccio’s introduction ‘Yuletide’. It produces many single bright red flowers with equally bright yellow stamens. The plant has attractive small green foliage born on a sturdy compact upright shrub that blooms typically in the holiday season. Julius collected seeds from ‘Hiryu’ a *C. vernalis* that only occasionally sets seeds which motivated Julius to harvest and grow a number of seedlings one of which we now know as ‘Yuletide’. It

won the Ralph Peer Sasanqua Award in 1974 and continues to be a very popular landscape plant that thrives in full sunlight in most microclimates where camellias are grown.



‘Yuletide’

Reticulata Hybrids

The ACS awards the Harris Hybrid Award each year to the originator of a seedling, not a sport, involving a cross of two or more camellia species. Nuccio’s Nurseries has won with three *C. reticulata* hybrids and two nonreticulata hybrids. The reticulata hybrids are ‘Francie L’ which has a very large rose red semi-double flower with irregular upright wavy petals; ‘Nuccio’s Ruby’ which has a large semi-double rich dark red flower with ruffled petals and ‘Curtain Call’ one of the largest reticulata hybrids which has a deep coral rose semi-double flower. ‘Francie L’ is widely distributed internationally in areas warm enough for them to bloom. In addition ‘Francie L’, ‘Curtain Call’ and ‘Queen Bee’ have won the Charlotte C. Knox Reticulata Award.

Non Reticulata Hybrids

Two of the most recent awards were made to Nuccio’s. ‘Buttons ‘N Bows’ a beautiful *C. saluenensis* formal double hybrid with a small light pink flower that shades to deeper pink and ‘Island Sunset’ a medium semi-double saluenensis hybrid flower with a rich coral pink petals that become progressively lighter in the center.



‘Island Sunset’



‘Buttons ‘N Bows’

The Kathryn and Les Marbury Award

This award is issued each year to the originator of the best small or small to medium *C. japonica* or non reticulata hybrid. ‘Buttons N’ Bows’ won the award in 1995. In camellia shows it is one the favorites of young women and children with the ruffled pink formal double flower resembling buttons and bows on a party dress. The *C. japonica* ‘Red Hots’ a small to medium with a bright red tubular semi-double flower with an occasional white petaloids won in 2012. This cultivar is a frequent show winner as a small due to its vibrant color and upright petals which are eye catching. It also has wonderful long dark green foliage on a columnar upright shrub.

Sports

The Swell Mutant Award is awarded to the originator of a sport showing a distinct break in color form not due to virus variegation. Nuccio’s Nurseries was awarded a silver Revere bowl in 1980 for ‘Elegans Champagne’ which has a large to very large impressive white anemone flower with a creamy center. When looking down into the bloom it reminds us of our favorite champagne with creamy yellow bubbles created by the petaloids and the mostly hidden yellow stamen.



‘Elegans Champagne’

Azaleas

Nuccio's Nurseries is also a premier grower and breeder of Azaleas. The catalogue list one hundred and five azaleas introduced by them. The Nuccio's Carnival Azaleas are noted for their large flowers, long booming season borne on vigorous sun tolerant plants. The Nuccio's Dragon Azaleas have very unusual cluster blooming flowers much like a spider chrysanthemums which make a unique eye catching plant. In one of many trips to Japan, Julius acquired Satsuki azaleas which means "fifth" month in Japanese. These plants bloom from mid-April through June thus providing beautiful late blooming flowers. They have bred seventeen of their own Satsuki hybrids to go along with the dozens of other Satsuki azaleas they offer.

Conclusion

Camellia growers worldwide have looked to Julius Nuccio for his wisdom and knowledge. The camellias introduced through the nursery are a worthy legacy of this remarkable family man. We close with words he wrote in 1981 in the Macoboy Preface cited above. "The camaraderie of camellia lovers is unequalled. It spans oceans and transcends both national and linguistic boundaries. Never in the world has a single flower brought together more people from different walks of life than has the camellia."



Julius Nuccio

Nuccio's Show Winners

By Beth Stone, Photos by Brad King

In the October 2015 *Camellia Review* (Vol. 77 No. 1), Don Bergamini summarized winners from the 2015 Camellia show season in California. As Don pointed out the new release, *C. japonica* 'Julius Nuccio' was a big winner. For this issue we thought it would be fun to take a look at which other Nuccio's varieties can be found on Don's single entries list. As it turns out nearly half the Japonica and Non-Reticulata varieties listed are Nuccio Introductions. Here they are along with year of introduction..... Now, if you'll excuse me, it's time to go shopping!

Japonica

| | |
|-----------------|------|
| Happy Harlequin | 2006 |
| Julius Nuccio | 2015 |
| Junior Prom | 1996 |
| Nuccio's Gem | 1970 |
| Nuccio's Jewel | 1977 |
| Red Devil | 2009 |
| Red Hots | 1992 |
| Royal Velvet | 1987 |
| Silver Triumph | 1973 |
| Tama Peacock | 2000 |



'Happy Harlequin'



'Red Devil'



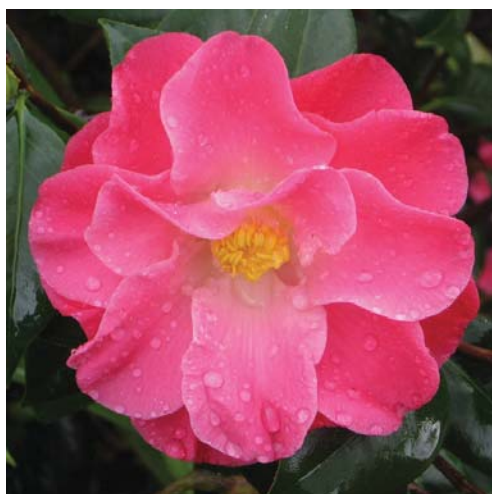
'Tama Peacock'

Non-Retic Hybrid

| | |
|-----------------|------|
| Buttons 'N Bows | 1985 |
| Honeymoon | 1992 |
| Hot Stuff | 2003 |
| Island Sunset | 2002 |
| Lucky Star | 1995 |
| Showboat | 2012 |



'Honeymoon'



'Island Sunset'



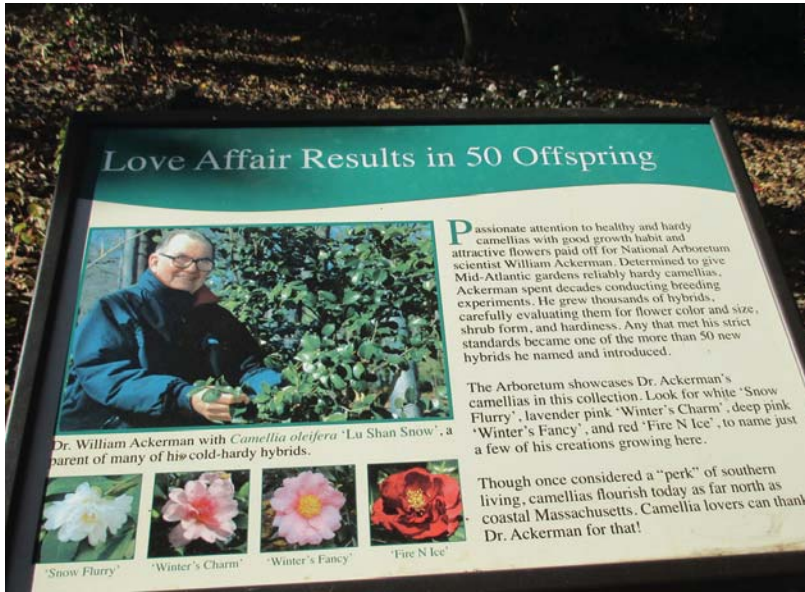
'Hot Stuff'



'Lucky Star'

William L. Ackerman Dedication at The United States National Arboretum

By James J. Fitzpatrick



On November 8, 2015, I was in the Washington, D.C. area visiting family. I scheduled time to attend the dedication of new signage for the 'Camellia Walk' in honor and memory of William L. Ackerman at the Asian Valley section of The United States National Arboretum. The Asian Valley is an area of the Arboretum where Dr. Ackerman (deceased July 2014) planted many of his successfully hybridized 'cold hardy' camellias.

The Camellia Society of the Potomac Valley (cspv.org) hosted the dedication ceremony after their monthly meeting. The Arboretum's Supervisory Horticulturist, Carole Bordelon, spoke on site at the dedication of a series of large permanent glass enclosed signs with pictures and descriptions of Dr. Ackerman's work. Attending were many members of the CSPV along with members of the Virginia Camellia Society who drove up from the Norfolk, VA, area.

The CSPV purchased the signs which grace the earthen walkway through the camellia garden with many of Dr. Ackerman's introductions clearly labeled. The camellias were in spectacular bloom on the warm autumn day for Washington.

For those Californians and others unfamiliar with Dr. Ackerman's work, here follows a brief background. Dr. Ackerman worked as a research horticulturist for United States Plant Introduction section of the Department of Agriculture

(USDA).

He worked for some time in Chico, CA, working with tree fruits and nuts. In 1959, he was transferred to the USDA facility in Glenn Dale, MD. where he began the study of the station's sizable camellia collection. Simultaneously, he began his studies in plant genetics at the University of Maryland where he combined his USDA research with his studies leading to obtaining a Ph.D. After earning his degree, he became immersed in cytogenetics including chromosome analysis, interspecific and intergeneric hybridization, and tissue and embryo culture.

After retirement, he continued his work at his Ashton, MD, farm of seven and a half acres where the temperatures normally run 10 to 12 degrees F. below those of Washington, DC proper. These colder environs spurred him into developing and selecting camellia specimens to hybridize for their cold-hardy resistance.

His significant contributions to the breeding, propagating and growing cold-hardy camellias may be found in his excellent work still obtainable for \$39.95: "Beyond the Camellia Belt" Ball Publishing, Copyright 2007. www.ballpublishing.com

What Shall We Call It?

By Bobbie Belcher, Photos by Brad King

Do you ever look at a beautiful flower and wonder how it got its particular name? At the camellia shows we all enjoy during the early months of the year, we see row after row of beautiful bloom all having different names. Who named them? And why that name? Because Nuccio's Nurseries is in our own backyard, we see many of their introductions at our camellia shows. Sometimes it's fun to know what's behind the name to share with visitors who come to see these lovely blooms. For instance, over the years we have learned that 'Katie' was named after Grandmother Nuccio. Her original namesake was 'Katherine Nuccio' in 1950, but the family didn't feel that this rather small bloom quite fit the image of the 250# grandmother. She was very fond of the very large 'Drama Girl' and the very large 'Katie' was a seedling from that plant. The Nuccio boys' aunt called her sister "Tata" and a beautiful large white flower was introduced with that name. The "a" in the original Tata was pronounced as in "at," but the "a" in the 'Tata' bloom is more commonly pronounced as in "ah ha."

Almost always the best way to get answers is to go to the source! After some good conversations with Tom Nuccio, here are some of the answers I got. Some names seem to have come easily. Tom thought his dad Julius may have heard the expres-

sion of how folks got dressed up in 'Buttons 'n Bows'. 'Ay' Ay' Ay' is a sport of 'Oo-la-la'— sounded appropriately French to the Nuccios! 'Disneyland' was introduced when the American Camellia Society had its convention at Disneyland in 1960. 'Elegans Champagne' retains the varietal name and the white flower resembles the bubbly drink! 'Grand Marshal' is that bright red of the roses decorating the Grand Marshal 's car in the Rose Parade . 'Little Slam' looked just like a mini 'Grand Slam'. And doesn't 'Grape Soda' look like a refreshing drink?



'Oo-la-la'



'Grape Soda'



'Ay Ay Ay'



'Grand Marshal'

'Happy Harlequin' was going to be named just 'Harlequin' until it was discovered that name was taken thus 'Happy Harlequin'. 'Cherries Jubilee' probably reminded someone of a pleasant dessert and another dark red bloom just looked like a 'Candy Apple' 'Black Magic? — such a glossy dark red it was magical! Imagine watching the sun disappear over the ocean — 'Island Sunset'. Tom said

they had named a new introduction 'Bright Eyes' but then discovered that name was taken. Afterwards he was singing while working "always keep my feet on the sunny side of the street." New name — 'Sunnyside'.

Although its form is not "higo" and it is not recognized by the international higo society, 'Happy Higo' has higo-like stamens and is a happy large red bloom! 'Showboat' seemed to be an appropriate name for this flashy bloom. The miniature pink bloom heavily striped with red looked like a 'Candy Mint.' 'Baby Doll' seemed like a nice name for this compact, miniature pink bloom. 'Ferris Wheel' was a great descriptive name for the new large white bloom with red stripes radiating from the red hub. The naming of 'Royal Velvet' is a favorite story among us locals. Evidently the family was having difficulty finding a name for this beautiful bloom until one of them happened to kick over the bathmat. The name on the label on the underside of the mat was just waiting to be discovered!



'Ferris Wheel'



'Nuccio's Cameo'

A number of precious stones appear in the Nuccio's introductions — 'Nuccio's Gem' was first in 1970, followed by 'Nuccio's Jewel' in 1977, 'Nuccio's Cameo' in 1983 and 'Nuccio's Pearl' in 1997. These gemstones are still winning trophies in our local shows. 'Tama' children are listed in the introductions; they all bear the white-edged petals of their mother. Those children carry their mother's first name plus their own descriptive names — Americana, Bambino, Beauty, Bell, Electra, Glitters, Peacock and Vino. It may be that the list will continue to grow.



'Tama Americana'



'Joe Nuccio'

Sometimes friends named new introductions — The blooms of 'Maroon and Gold' introduced in 1961 reminded Bill Woodroof, original Editor of *Camellia Nomenclature*, of the colors of his alma mater, University of Southern California. Harvey Short offered 'Yuletide' as a name for what has become a very popular commercial sasanqua. Earlier in 1963 he had suggested 'Wildfire' as a name for the orange red medium japonica. In 1971 Ralph Peer named his very large rose pink japonica 'Dolores Hope' in honor of his friend and then asked the Nuccios if they had a big red one they would be willing to name to honor Bob Hope. Also in 1971 Clark Thomas asked if one of their introductions could be named to honor his city San Dimas. In 1999, while walking through the Nuccio nursery, Jackie Randall commented that the little pink blooms growing up and down the stem of an unnamed non-retic looked like 'Bunny Ears.'

We know that Joe Nuccio loved the new pink seedling with its incurved petals which was introduced in his honor as 'Joe Nuccio' in 1991. The Nuccio boys had wanted to name the 2002 large red formal 'Nuccio's Bella Rossa' after their dad, but he would not agree. However, a very large dark red japonica was recently introduced as 'Julius Nuccio' over the honoree's protests and has quickly become a favorite at our local shows.

Camellia growers worldwide appreciate the Nuccio's Nurseries in Altadena. Twenty years ago Mel and I visited Tan's Camellia Nursery in Malaysia. When we asked Mr. Tan where he got these non-native plants, he said he ordered them from Nuccio's Nursery! Such a small world for camellia lovers — and doesn't the love of camellias make strangers into friends!!

Camellia Species: *C. amplexicaulis*
Story and Photos by Brad King



C. amplexicaulis

Camellia amplexicaulis is a beautiful and unusual camellia. The flowers are single small to medium with 7 to 11 fleshy thick petals. It was formally discovered and described in 1916. It grows rapidly, forming a small tree when mature. The flower buds are never green but are deep pink to red from early formation until opening. The leaves are large, oblong, textured and finely serrated.

In Vietnam this camellia species is sold in local markets for cut flowers and potted plants. This species is of North Vietnamese origin but so far no wild populations have been located. It has been propagated for hundreds of years around Buddhist temples.

There are different clones of this species with different sized leaves and color flowers (pink, red to purplish red). The Nuccio's Nursery propagates two forms. Type A (from Atagawa Tropical Garden and Alligator Farm, Atagawa, Japan) has large leaves up to nine inches with pinkish red bud with a deep pink small to medium semi double flower with a fine white edge. Type T (from Mr. Hiroshi Terada, Oshima, Japan) which has a slightly smaller flower and smaller foliage up to five inches with a very red bud that opens to a red flower with a fine white edge.

C. amplexicaulis is a rather rangy ungainly growing camellia that when small may require staking. It can form a small tree when mature with a tropical look. It blooms mid to late season both from the terminal branches and along the stems. It has potential when crossed with japonica cultivars to produce attractive new

cultivars with foliage larger than most japonica leaves on a plant that grows more like a japonica. The ovaries have 3 to 5 locular (small compartment which contains the seeds). The seed pod is oval, smooth and green turning to an eggplant plant reddish purple as it matures.



C. amplexicaulis buds



C. amplexicaulis seedpod

What's New At Nuccio's: Their Azaleas are Outstanding By Bradford King

Azaleas have been grown by Nuccio's Nurseries since 1935. Thousands of seedling have been propagated over the last eighty years with several hundred introduced by Nuccio's. They have chosen beautiful cultivars in varying colors, size and forms to propagate. Today over one hundred Nuccio introductions are listed in the nursery catalogue which also list over two hundred other azalea varieties. This includes sixteen Nuccio's Hybrid Belgian type Azaleas, fourteen Kurme type, seven Carnival, five Nuccio's Dragon azaleas, seventeen Satsuki hybrids and eighteen Nuccio's miscellaneous azaleas.

Recently I asked Tom and Jim Nuccio about new azaleas. They both became enthusiastic about 'Green Glow' a miscellaneous hybrid azalea. The breeder was seeking to get a yellow azalea and produced this unique light green flower.



‘Green Glow’



‘Nuccio’s Carnival’

The Nuccio’s “Carnival” Azaleas are characterized by large flowers, long blooming season borne on vigorous sun tolerant plants that are outstanding in the landscape that do especially well in sunny California. Many years ago the followers of the Catholic religion in Italy started the tradition of holding a wild costume festival right before the first day of Lent. Because Catholics were not supposed to eat meat during Lent, they called their festival, carnevale, which means “to put away the meat.” A Carnival typically involves a public celebration and parade combining some elements of a circus, masks and a public street party. We celebrate Nuccio’s Carnival Azaleas for the show they provide in the garden like a carnival party.

In their azalea breeding program they used ‘Koromo Shikibu’ a Japanese native azalea with a single lavender flower with narrow well separated spaced petals. This petal trait has provided a few unusual, cluster blooming spider chrysanthemum like azalea flowers. They are eye catching unique flowers. In 1999 they introduced ‘Nuccio’s Purple Dragon’ which inspired them to call these seedlings “Dragon Azaleas”.

A dragon is a mythological representation of a reptile. Dragons were mostly envisaged as serpents until the Middle Ages when it was common to depict them with legs, resembling a giant lizard. There are two distinct cultural traditions of dragons: the European dragon, derived from European folk traditions and the Chinese dragon, with counterparts in Japan, Korea and other East Asian countries.

Currently there are five “Dragon Azaleas.” The two newest are ‘Nuccio’s Be-

witched'; a large single with a soft orchid pink toned lighter flower with full broad petals that taper to a very narrow base and 'Nuccio's Wicked Witch' which has a large single dark reddish purple flower with narrow well-spaced petals.



'Nuccio's Wicked Witch'

Julius Nuccio imported Satsuki Azaleas from Japan where they have been grown for centuries. They are treasured for their adaptability to bonsai culture, late blooming season (May-June), dense growth, and their blooming time which is valued for extending the blooming season until spring.



'Nuccio's Lucky Charm'



'Nuccio's Blue Moon'

The most recent Nuccio azalea introductions are 'Nuccio's French Lace' which has a medium single to semidouble lavender to white flower with ruffled petals and 'Nuccio's Spitfire' which has a medium single white flower with brilliant orange red speckles and stripes. It sports a few red flowers and occasionally a solid pink bloom.



'Nuccio's Spitfire'



'Nuccio's French Lace'

Tea: The Most Important Camellia In The World By Bradford King

The tea plant (*Camellia sinensis*) is the most important camellia commercially throughout the world. In fact tea has changed the world in many ways over the centuries. Worldwide it is second to water as the drink of choice. The history of tea is long and complex, spreading across multiple cultures and thousands of years. Although many stories are told about the beginnings of tea being used as a beverage, no one is sure of its origins. One popular legend is that Shennong, Emperor of China, was drinking a bowl of just boiled water when a few leaves from a tea tree blew into the bowl which changed its color. The emperor took a sip and enjoyed the flavor. Another version is that the emperor was testing on himself the medical properties of various herbs, some of them poisonous, finding tea worked as an antidote.

SANITATION

Because contaminated water was a major cause of death, the boiling of water for tea sanitized the water thereby greatly reducing illness and death. Early generations bathed, washed clothing and were unaware of the need to separate human elimination from their source of drinking water. Even in industrial nations, clean

drinking water was not always available. Therefore the French drank wine, Germans beer and the British ale instead of water. Consequently when tea was introduced productive work was greatly improved. The brewed tea was disease-free contained caffeine and antioxidants improving health and energy.

MEDITATION

Tea began in China and spread to Japan where it became connected to Zen Buddhism. Monks spent hours in meditation found that the stimulants in tea kept them awake and alert as they meditated. Elaborate tea rituals evolved over time. In the tea service a sweet is first served to guests to balance the bitter taste of the tea. The tea utensils are purified symbolically with a silk cloth.



Tea Sweets



Silk Cloth Cleaning



Tea Utensils

Invited guests also symbolically cleaned themselves at a water fountain before entering the tea house. The pace is slow to help bring a relaxing, pleasant and respectful tone to the ceremony. A tea house is frequently located in a beautifully landscaped garden. A parchment scroll with the word for the day is hung near a vase containing a single flower. These rituals bring simple beauty, peace and serenity to participants.



Tea House



Tea Ceremony

TEA IN THE WEST

Tea arrived in Europe via Dutch and Portuguese sailors at the beginning of the 17th century. They had trade relations with China and brought the tea to Britain and Holland, where it was sold at auctions and became very popular among the aristocracy and the wealthy. The beverage's initial high price prevented it from circulating among the western population at large. The tea trade was a significant factor in establishing connections between east and west. In China, tea leaves were used as a substitute for coins. In Europe, tea was used as a symbol of high status and as a stimulus for many technological developments, for instance, the development of fast sail boats such as the "Clipper", which shortened the time it took to sail from China to Europe and made it possible to provide shipments of fresh tea to the west.

Tea was imported in the 1660's to Britain with the marriage of King Charles II to Catherine of Braganza a Portuguese princess, who introduced the drinking of tea to the court. British companies were established for the importing tea, for example "The East India Trade Company". The royal family empowered them to operate in any way necessary to ensure the continuous supply of this popular drink. At the beginning of the 18th century, with the expansion of tea imports to the west and the consequent decrease in its price, tea became a common product enjoyed by all sectors of the population.

China exported tea in the 1760's demanding silver in return. Opium from India was traded for tea. For three centuries after the arrival of the Europeans, China maintained a tight control over trade with Europeans. In the 1830's conflict broke out between China and the British over the trade of opium, which was causing severe problems in Chinese society. When the Chinese authorities began seizing and destroying chests of opium, the English declared war. The British, with their superior technology, attacked and defeated China. In the aftermath, the Chinese were forced to open several ports to English merchants and allow the ports to be governed by British consuls who were not subject to Chinese law. Hong Kong became a colony of the British Empire until 1997. This opened up trade of many goods including the supply of tea to European markets.

TEA IN AMERICA

At the beginning of the 18th century, tea arrived in Northern America, quickly becoming a desirable drink. In New York and Boston, London-style teahouses started developing, where the drink was sold to the general public. At around that time, the British Empire decided to place taxes on the tea supply to the colonies of North America who were under their power. This decision greatly angered the

American settlers who decided to boycott the taxed products in protest. Whenever the British ships arrived at the harbors laden with tea, the settlers would start demonstrations which forced the ships to leave without unloading their wares. The most famous occurrence in this regard was named the “Boston Tea Party”, during which a group of settler’s boarded one of the ships anchored in the Boston harbor and started throwing hundreds of crates of tea from its deck into the sea. England retaliated by sending military forces to the harbor and shutting it down. This event marked the beginning of the American War of Independence.

MARKETING OF TEA

The invention of tea bags significantly increased its popularity. A New York tea merchant by the name of Thomas Sullivan is credited with inventing tea bags in 1908. Sullivan, a New York tea importer, inadvertently invented tea bags when he sent tea samples to clients in small silk bags. His customers mistakenly steeped the bags whole. Sullivan did not realize this until his customers started to complain that the orders they received were no longer in the silk sample bags. Silk was too expensive for bagging; therefore, he invented tea bags made of gauze. Most tea sold today is in paper bags, although there is a growing demand for both the loose leaf teas and for the ready to drink iced tea in western countries.



CONCLUSION

Tea has impacted and changed the world in many ways as an agricultural crop that has benefitted the health and wellness of people around the world. Initially because brewing tea sanitizes the beverage. In addition tea contains the mild stimulant we know as caffeine which helped Buddhist priest while meditating as well as a millions of people worldwide stay awake and alert whether farming, tending to children, or working in an office or industrial plant. Green and black teas have antioxidants that are beneficial to human health. Traditional Japanese tea ceremonies or a cup of tea enjoyed at home or work is both relaxing and energizing.

Camellia Art: Celebrating Nuccio's Varietals

Article and Photos by Beth Stone

In 2010 Nuccio's Nursery celebrated their Diamond Jubilee. In honor of this impressive milestone, the Southern California Camellia Society introduced a new Camellia Show class called "Nuccio's Introductions". The class continues to be a feature of all the SCCS shows. This has proven to be a highly competitive masters class with unique challenges and beauty showcasing our very best exhibitors.

Exhibits consist of six different varieties. Each variety must be one of those introduced by Nuccio's Nursery, a list numbering well over 200. Entries are judged according to the following schedule:

Quality of blooms 70%. The judging of quality gives equal weight (17.5% each) to size, color, form, and condition. The quality of the entry is based on the quality of the weakest bloom.

Overall impression 30%. Creation of an impression favorable to the judges is left to the imagination and creativity of the exhibitor. Herein lies the artistry.

So what are the particular challenges of this class?

First of all the exhibitor must select high quality blooms, any of which might be a winner if entered as a single bloom. The exhibitor commits 6 blooms to this class, putting all of those particular eggs in the same basket as it were. Next the exhibitor must select varieties which look balanced and harmonious together as a grouping. Finally, they decide how to arrange the blooms on a large flat tray. What will create an impression pleasing to the eye?

What makes this class particularly beautiful?

The observer is treated to a view into the exhibitor's plant collection. Here we see 6 varieties the growers, with their own particular esthetic, have chosen to cultivate in their own gardens. The exhibitor shows personal artistic flair in bloom selection and placement. Each exhibit is an elegant floral arrangement, simplified to just the blooms.

Let's have a look at winning entries from the January 2016 SCCS shows. First we have the SCCS's 67th annual show on January 23rd show at Descanso Gardens.

George & Karen Harrison's 1st place entry is anchored by the eye-catching new Nuccio's introduction, C. j. 'Ferris Wheel'. 'Ferris Wheel's' splotches and stripes of color on a white background harmonize with the white, soft pink, coral pink and deep red of the other 5 blooms. Each bloom is of the single or semi-double form having dominant stamens which further unifies the grouping. The size combination of 2 small, 3 medium and 1 large bloom is a pleasing mix.



In Linda & Joe Tunner's 2nd place entry, 3 large white blooms anchor the exhibit while 2 medium and 1 small bloom provide the pop of color. A range of forms is included to pleasant effect with the loose petaloids of C. j. 'Tama Beauty' complementing the full anemone center of C. j. 'Elegans Champagne'. The coral pink hue of hybrids such as 'Island Sunset' can clash with red but here the range from 'Island Sunset' to C. j. 'Tama Beauty' to the deep red center of C. j. 'Tama Peacock' is a pleasing transition. Wouldn't you love to have this arrangement of blooms on a crystal platter as your table center piece?

The next winners are from the SCCS Show at The La County Arboretum on January 30th.

Linda & Joe Tunner's 1st place entry blends soft pinks and white. The fluffy petaloid centers of C. j. 'Snow Chan' and 'Showtime' complement the characteristic wavy petals of the other 4 varieties. The range of C. j. 'Happy Harlequin's' pink tones from a rose pink center fading to pale pink





toward the edges overlaps with the tones in the other 2 pink blooms.

Linda & Joe Tunner's 2nd place entry is a striking interplay of deep red and white. This particular bloom of C. j. 'Grape Soda' is a strong red with just a hint of lavender allowing it to blend

well with the brilliant red of the other 2 blooms. The symmetry of the arrangement is pleasing, with the anemone centered C. j. 'Elegans Champagne' placed in the center surrounded by single to semi-double forms.

From the Archives: Nuccio's 50th Anniversary (Fall 1984)

By Bill Donnan

Nuccio's Nurseries, growers of rare camellias and azaleas, is celebrating its 50th anniversary this forthcoming camellia season. (*Editor's note this was published in the fall 1984 issue of the Camellia Review*) We would like to tell you a little bit about the nursery and the people who own it and run it. Nuccio's Nurseries was started by two brothers, Joe and Julius Nuccio. Their father, Giulio Nuccio had to come to America from Northern Italy and settled in the Los Angeles area with his wife Katherine. Later they moved to Alhambra where Joe and Julius grew up. All through high school Julius worked for the Western Nursery in Alhambra. There he learned how to grow nursery stock and developed the fine art of grafting and propagating. When he graduated from high school, in 1934, he decided to open a small nursery on Bushnell Street in Alhambra. His older brother, Joe, had a night-shift job at Tyre Brothers Glass Factory and he got Julius a job there. Together, they worked the night shift and ran the nursery during the daytime.

At the start all kinds of plants were offered for sale but the main push was to get into the camellia and azalea business. In those days there were not too many different varieties available. They had 80 "parent" camellia plants planted in the ground and they made cuttings from them for grafting and propagating. By 1941 there were working full time in the nursery and they had built up a thriving trade. Then came World War II. Joe went into the shipyards and Julius was drafted into the Army and sent to the South Pacific. Before they disbanded the nursery they potted up the 80 "parent" camellia plants into tubs and trucked them to Joe's

back yard. They were to be the foundation of a new nursery when the War ended. Early in 1941, the Nuccio's had looked at a 40 acre tract of "rocks, rills, and rubbish" north of Alta Loma Drive in Altadena. Part of the tract was a local rubbish dump and they had planned to re-locate the nursery there. The owner was asking \$6,000 for the tract but when the War came on all plans were put aside. Then, in 1944, near the end of the War, Joe looked at the tract again and the price had jumped to \$13,000! They decided to make an offer and bought it for \$12,500. With the War ended and the ship yards closed down, Joe and Julius started all over again in the nursery business.

They cleared off a couple of acres and erected a small lath house. They hauled in the 80 "parent" camellia plants, in tubs, and they were "off and running." However, instead of concentrating on a few easy to grow "bread and butter" plants, the Nuccio's were eager to develop new varieties. In 1950 they came out with their first introduction. It was 'Katherine Nuccio', a red formal double, named after their mother.



'Katherine Nuccio'

The next year they introduced 'Primavera', a white formal double. Thus began the proud tradition of developing and introducing new varieties. This tradition has propelled them into becoming one of the noteworthy breeders of rare and new camellias and azaleas in the world. Since 1950 they have originated and named over 100 excellent new camellias and have propagated and released another 25 or 30 cultivars brought to them for introduction.

Camellia cultivars which have been developed by Nuccio's Nurseries have won 33 major awards from the American Camellia Society and the Southern California Camellia Society. Their 1983-84 catalogue lists 255 Japonicas, 40 Sasanquas, 74 hybrids, 20 Reticulatas, 19 Higos, 12 Rusticanas, and 9 foliage plants. They offer 28 different species of plants for sale and stock about 25 other species for hybridizing. They will be releasing *C. chrysantha* (Editor's note: this species is now called *C. nitidissima*) in the fall of 1984 as one of the new species for sale. The nursery now has 10 acres under shade with 25 total acres developed. There is a possibility of developing the other 15 acres-- as needed.

Thru Wind and Rain...

By Linda and Joe Tunner

The flower that blooms in adversity is the rarest and most beautiful of all.

Walt Disney Company,
From "Mulan"



Camellia japonica, 'C.M. Hovey', bejeweled by rain

Each Camellia Review brings stories about, advice for, and photos of the lovely flowers that the camellia plant bears. We wanted to say a few words about the resiliency exhibited by these fascinating plants. Basically, camellia flowers have to be tough to bloom when they do, during the winter storms.



Camellia reticulata, 'Valley Knudsen,' enjoys the benefits of a lighter canopy and more diffuse sunlight.

there is very little competition with the canopy trees for it; they are all dormant.

Practically any angiosperm or highly evolved flowering plant provides for the next generation by blooming during the relatively pleasant seasons of spring and summer. So the question arises, why do camellias bloom during one of the worst weather seasons of the year and how can their flowers stand up to those conditions?

Taking a look at camellias in the wild, you will notice at once that they flower when most temperate deciduous trees are naked. This propensity allows the plant to receive much more sunlight at a period when the light is the least intense of the whole year. Making a camellia flower takes a lot of energy and we see this energy converted into flower size each night as the plant respire. Also, water is plentiful at this time and

But what about those flowers? How do they have the ability to stand up to the inclement conditions of winter? We all know that there are camellias that arrive at the show in excellent condition without much trouble or care from the exhibitor. There are also those that show marks and creases, go off the calyx, and shatter at the slightest bit of impact. Basically for a flower's evolutionary benefit, all it needs is for the flowering parts to stay intact long enough to be fertilized. In fact, many flowers shed their corolla as soon as they are fertilized, or very shortly thereafter. Obviously, winter flowers need to be physically tough for them to stand up to the elements and give themselves the best chance of being fertilized. This evolutionary selection is probably the reason that so many large camellia flowers will make it to a show and actually look good for days as long as they are not exposed to high heat or blight spores.



We went looking, through all our inclement weather photos for our Parting Shot - a camellia with excellent flower substance that stands up well to humidity, wind, and transport stress. The picture that jumped out at us was, *Camellia japonica*, 'Tata.' The flower size is large to very large and the plant grows in an upright, bushy and vigorous manner that resists high wind conditions well and shelters its flowers. We would like to hear about your favorites - e-mail us care of the Camellia Review Editor, bkd@usc.edu



Linda and Joe Tunner
Spring, 2016



PARTING SHOT

Julius Nuccio & Family,
we thank you!



'Nuccio's Pearl' Photo by Brad King